美味しんぼ

31

雁屋 哲・花咲アキラ

スピリッツコミックス好評発売中！

美味しんぼ（雁屋哲・花咲アキラ）… 1～31集
なぜか笑介（聖日出夫）…… 1～28集
F〈エフ〉（六田登）…… 1～22集
YAWARA！（浦沢直樹）…… 1～18集
マドンナ（くじらいいく子）…… 1～17集
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装丁／海野一雄　　カバー・フォト／坂井信彦

BIG COMICS

美味しんぼ 31

鍋対決!!

作・雁屋 哲 画・花咲アキラ

◆

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■ビッグコミックス

美味しんぼ……Ⅰ～31集発売中

■スピリッツコミックス好評発売中／■

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妻をめとらば（柳沢きみお）……全15巻
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ハーフな分だけ（星里もちる）……全 2 巻
りざべーしょんプリーズ（細野不二彦）全 2 巻
あどりぶシネ倶楽部（細野不二彦）……全 1 巻
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かぼちゃ白書（六田登・タモツ）……全 1 巻
座・スターダスト（国友やすゆき）…全 1 巻
美紅・舞子（西村しのぶ）……全 1 巻
胡桃（佐藤宏之）……全 1 巻

美味しんぼ

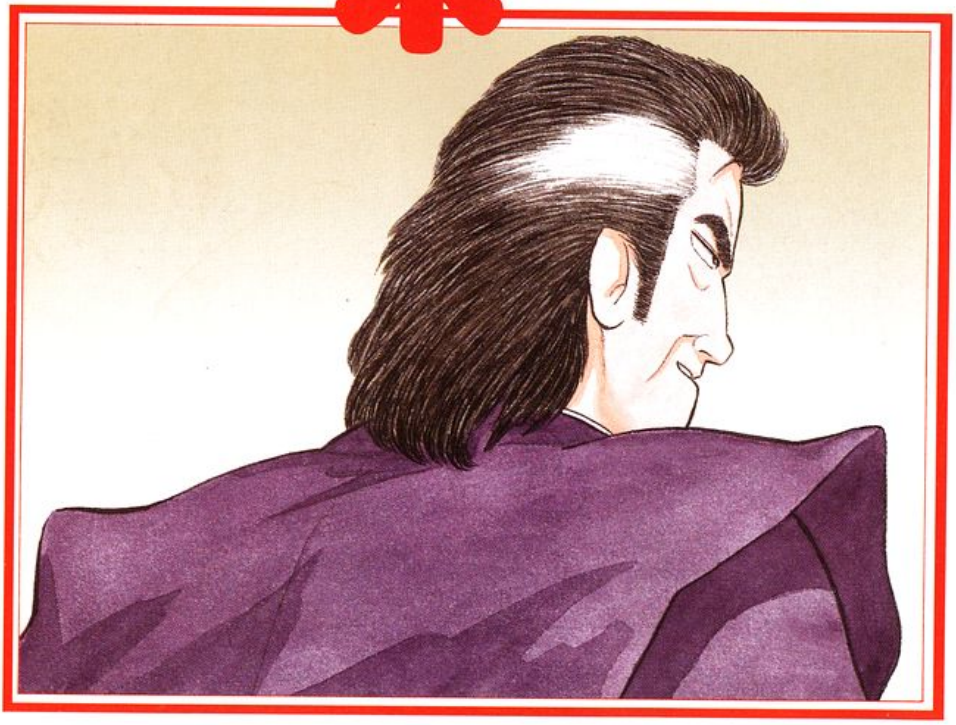
31 鍋対決!!

作・雁屋 哲
画・花咲アキラ

31 鍋対決!!

■表紙・裏表紙の写真／至高の五大鍋の一つ、カニ鍋の素材、松葉ガニ。撮影協力／『京味』(新橋)☎03(3591)3344

美味(おい)しんぼ



美味しんぼ（おいしい）

31 鍋対決!!

第1話　能あるホヤ……3
第2話　良いナス、悪いナス…25
第3話　お祖父ちゃんのおモチ…47
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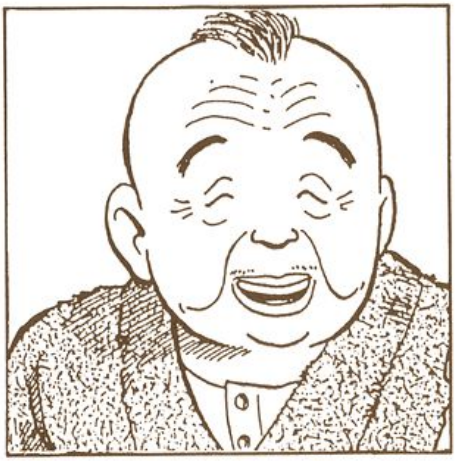


第1話
能あるホヤ

MR. YAMAOKA, LET'S HEAD HOME.
東西新聞社
WELL, THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY...

IS MR. YAMAOKA HERE!?
ｳｳｳ

ACTUALLY, I'M EXPECTING SOME VISITORS...
OH, A CUSTOMER AT THIS HOUR?

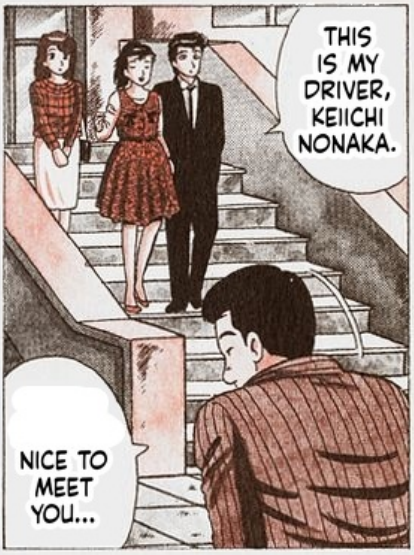
2

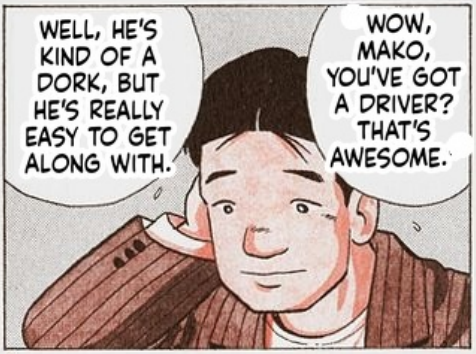
ｻｯ
HAVE YOU BEEN DOING OKAY? YOU HAVEN'T BEEN CHEATING ON ME WITH SOME OTHER WOMAN, HAVE YOU?!

HEYYYY, MAKO-CHAN...

SINCE MR. YAMAOKA AND I ARE ENGAGED, PLEASE KEEP THAT IN MIND -!!
I AM MAKO YUMURA.
ぺこり
SHE'S THE YOUNGER SISTER OF ONE OF MY SENIORS FROM COLLEGE; SHE'S A SOPHOMORE AT A WOMEN'S COLLEGE RIGHT NOW.
.....
HEY, MAKO, CUT IT OUT...
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
KURITA-SAN IS COMING TOO.
HEHEHE... HEY, MAKO, LET'S GO GET SOMETHING TO EAT.
YOU TRICKED AN INNOCENT, PURE-HEARTED GIRL?!
OH, MR. YAMAOKA, WHEN I WAS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, I ASKED YOU TO MARRY ME, AND YOU SAID YES, DIDN'T YOU...
"WHAT?! THIS PERSON'S COMING TOO?! THAT'S A BUMMER!"
HEY!
ME? BUT...
3
YOU CAN'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN AROUND COLLEGE GIRLS!
GO ON!

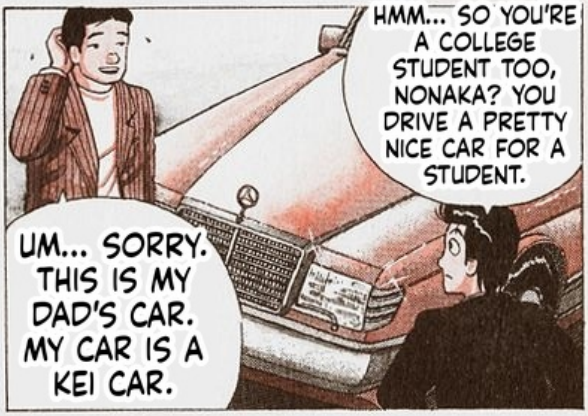
COME ON, DON'T SLUR YOUR WORDS.


THIS IS MY DRIVER, KEIICHI NONAKA.
NICE TO MEET YOU...

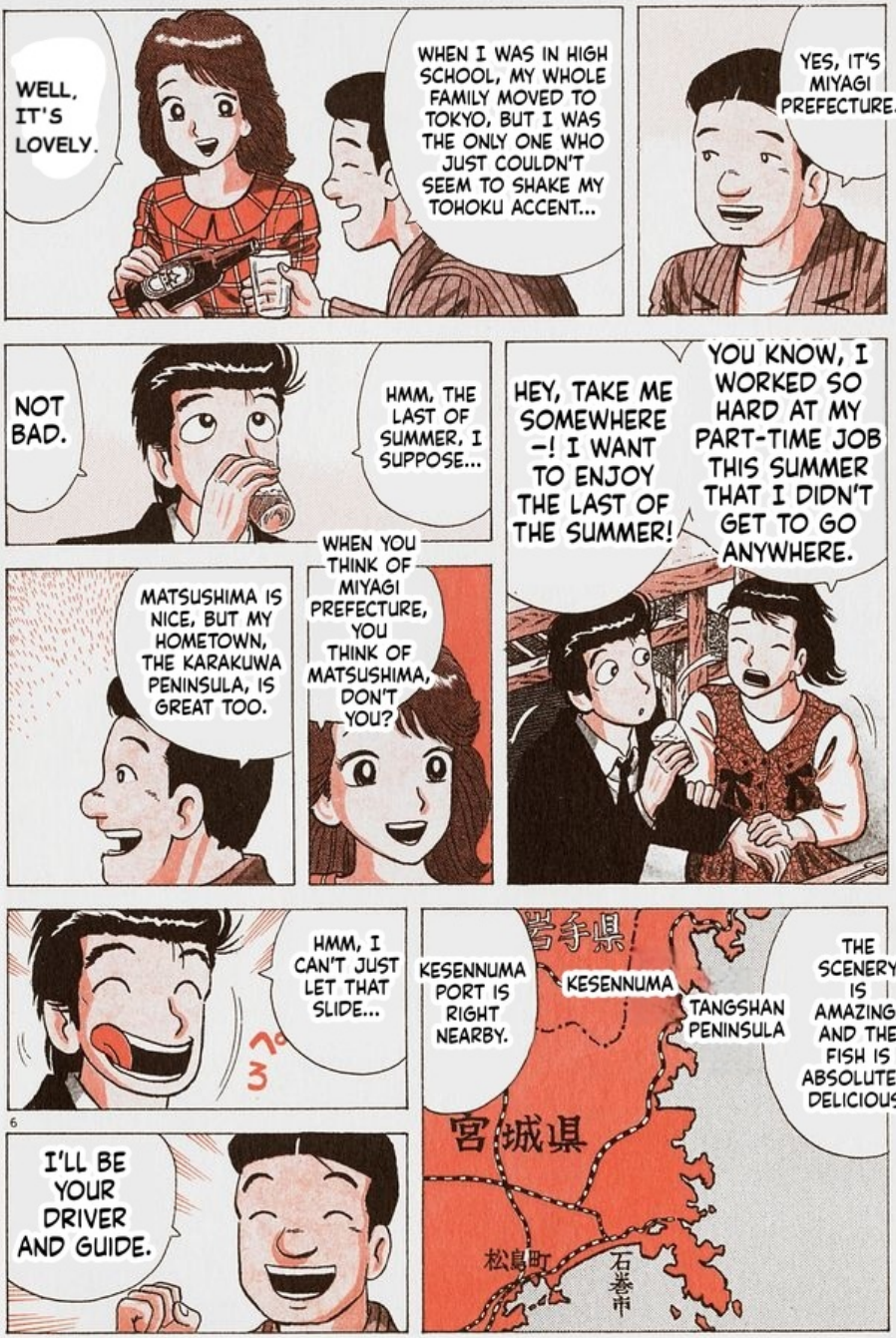

WOW, MAKO, YOU'VE GOT A DRIVER? THAT'S AWESOME.
WELL, HE'S KIND OF A DORK, BUT HE'S REALLY EASY TO GET ALONG WITH.

4

DID YOU BORROW YOUR DAD'S CAR JUST TO IMPRESS MAKO?

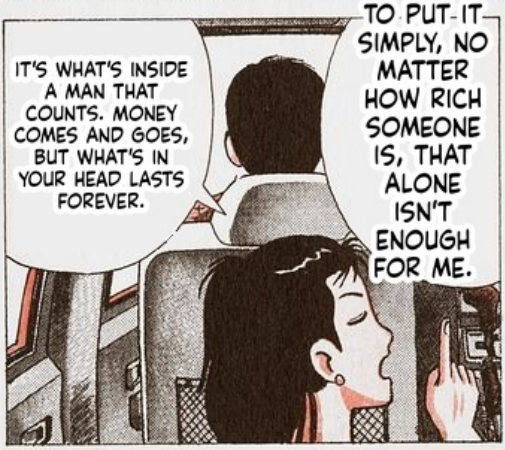

HMM... SO YOU'RE A COLLEGE STUDENT TOO, NONAKA? YOU DRIVE A PRETTY NICE CAR FOR A STUDENT.
UM... SORRY. THIS IS MY DAD'S CAR. MY CAR IS A KEI CAR.

YES.
WELL, THAT GOES WITHOUT SAYING.
IF YOU SHOW UP IN SOME CHEAP CAR, I WON'T LET YOU BE MY DRIVER.
HMM...
SO, HOW'S YOUR BROTHER?
HE'S DOING FINE, BUT HE'S A GONER.
岡星
IT'S HIS WIFE'S FAULT...
SHE HAS HIM COMPLETELY WRAPPED AROUND HER FINGER.
ギョッ
I'LL BE FINE. I'LL BE MR. YAMAOKA'S OBEDIENT WIFE.
HEHE...
IS MR. NONAKA FROM TOHOKU?


WELL, IT'S LOVELY.
WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, MY WHOLE FAMILY MOVED TO TOKYO, BUT I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO JUST COULDN'T SEEM TO SHAKE MY TOHOKU ACCENT...
YES, IT'S MIYAGI PREFECTURE.
NOT BAD.
HMM, THE LAST OF SUMMER, I SUPPOSE...
HEY, TAKE ME SOMEWHERE -! I WANT TO ENJOY THE LAST OF THE SUMMER!
YOU KNOW, I WORKED SO HARD AT MY PART-TIME JOB THIS SUMMER THAT I DIDN'T GET TO GO ANYWHERE.
WHEN YOU THINK OF MIYAGI PREFECTURE, YOU THINK OF MATSUSHIMA, DON'T YOU?
MATSUSHIMA IS NICE, BUT MY HOMETOWN, THE KARAKUWA PENINSULA, IS GREAT TOO.
HMM, I CAN'T JUST LET THAT SLIDE...
KESENNUMA PORT IS RIGHT NEARBY.
岩手県
KESENNUMA
TANGSHAN PENINSULA
THE SCENERY IS AMAZING, AND THE FISH IS ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS.
宮城県
松島町
石巻市
I'LL BE YOUR DRIVER AND GUIDE.

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME!?
THAT'S SO MEAN! YOU GUYS JUST WENT AHEAD AND HAD ALL THE FUN WITHOUT ME!
YEAH!
SINCE WE'RE AT IT, WHY NOT JUST GO FOR IT?!
HUH? AREN'T YOU COMING WITH ME?
YOU'RE SO MEAN!
HEY! I WANT TO GO, TOO!
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D END UP PLAYING THE ROLE OF A DRIVER LIKE THIS...
AHAHA...
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE NONAKA REALLY LIKES MAKO, DOESN'T HE?

MAKO, YOU'RE SO COLD.
JUST BE HAPPY THAT I'M LETTING YOU DRIVE. DON'T GET ANY BIG IDEAS BEYOND THAT.


IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE A MAN THAT COUNTS. MONEY COMES AND GOES, BUT WHAT'S IN YOUR HEAD LASTS FOREVER.
TO PUT IT SIMPLY, NO MATTER HOW RICH SOMEONE IS, THAT ALONE ISN'T ENOUGH FOR ME.

AND THEN THERE'S THE CONTENT, TOO...
I MEAN, NONAKA-KUN ISN'T EXACTLY EASY ON THE EYES, IS HE?

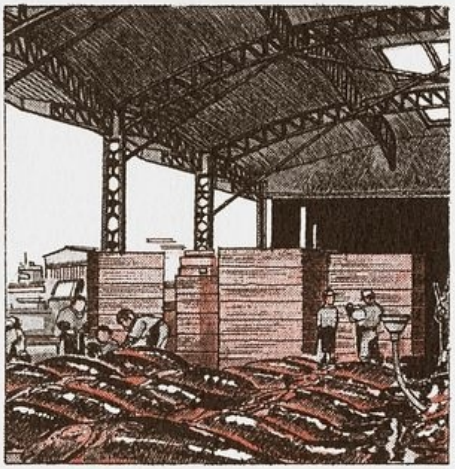
WELL, THAT'S HARSH...

SO, NONAKA, YOU SHOULDN'T EXPECT ANYTHING MORE FROM ME THAN JUST BEING YOUR DRIVER.

8

YOUNG PEOPLE PUT MONEY FIRST, DON'T THEY?
IN THAT WAY, MAKO IS A BIT DIFFERENT FROM YOUNG PEOPLE THESE DAYS, ISN'T SHE?
NO WAY. EVEN IF THEY HAVE MONEY, PEOPLE WITH NO SUBSTANCE ARE JUST SO BORING.

WOW! WHAT A MAGNIFICENT SEA BASS.



9

ポカーン

WOW! ISN'T THAT A BLACK ROCKFISH?!

JUST BLANCH IT QUICKLY, DIP IT IN SOME STRAINED UMEBOSHI PASTE, AND YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO RESIST!
THIS GUY'S GREAT AS SASHIMI, BUT WHEN HE'S THIS BIG AND FATTY...

WHICH ARE CAUGHT ALL ALONG THE COAST FROM HOKKAIDO TO SANRIKU—AND THEY'RE ALL DELICIOUS.
THERE ARE ALSO OTHER VARIETIES LIKE THE MASO, MURAZOI, AND GOMAZO,
WHEN YOU SIMMER THIS IN A SWEET AND SAVORY SAUCE, MAN, IT'S JUST IRRESISTIBLY DELICIOUS!
IT'S A LITTLE TOO EARLY FOR THE SEASON, BUT...
BECAUSE THE SOI IS SO DELICIOUS THAT THEY STARTED USING IT AS A CHANT.
THEY SHOUT "SOI-SOI!" OUT THERE, BUT THAT'S
YOU KNOW THAT FAMOUS HOKKAIDO FOLK SONG, "ESASHI OIWAKE," RIGHT?
10
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN NONAKA-KUN LOOKING SO LIVELY...
MR. NONAKA IS REALLY FUNNY, ISN'T HE?
OF COURSE NOT.
REALLY? IS THAT SO?
でへへへっ
YOU BASTARD! YOU SET ME UP!

OH, RIGHT, HOW ABOUT SEA SQUIRTS?
UM...
WHAT'S A SEA SQUIRT?
FEED ME SOMETHING THAT'S UNIQUE TO THIS SEASON.
"HEY, NONAKA, SINCE YOU'VE GONE ALL THE WAY OUT TO SANRIKU..."
"EEK! WHAT IS THIS?!"
A SEA SQUIRT, OBVIOUSLY.
11
THEY SAY ONCE YOU GET USED TO IT, YOU CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF IT...
I GUESS IT DEPENDS ON THE PERSON, BUT...
"CAN YOU REALLY EAT THIS?!"
EWW, THAT'S GROSS!

SO, COOKING HAS BECOME MY HOBBY...
MY PARENTS BELIEVED THAT BOYS SHOULD KNOW HOW TO COOK, SO THEY MADE ME PICK UP A KNIFE WHEN I WAS JUST A KID.

I'LL COOK.
HOW DO YOU EAT IT?

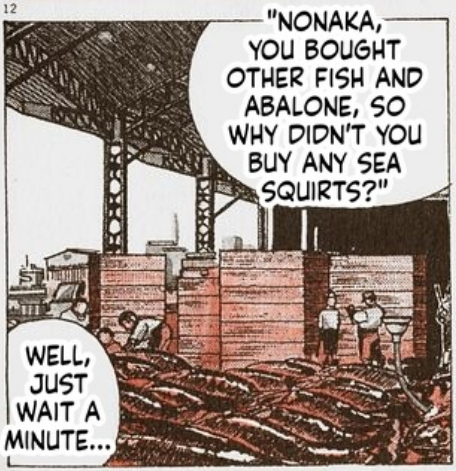
HUH? NONAKA-KUN?

I...

IT SEEMS LIKE MR. NONAKA HAS A LOT OF SIDES TO HIM THAT MAKO DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT.

I HAD NO IDEA!

12


"NONAKA, YOU BOUGHT OTHER FISH AND ABALONE, SO WHY DIDN'T YOU BUY ANY SEA SQUIRTS?"
WELL, JUST WAIT A MINUTE...

WELL, LET'S GO AHEAD AND BUY THIS.
OH, UM...

EH?

OH,
LOOK, THIS...!

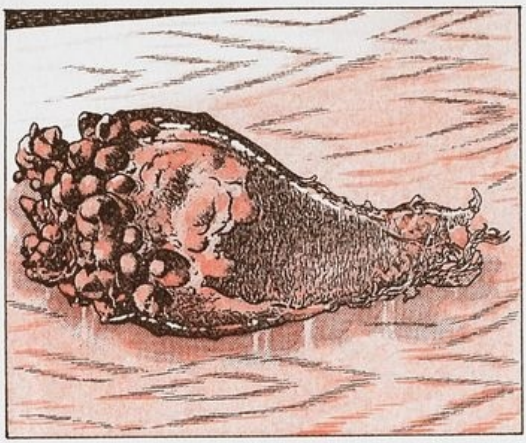
舟津
鮮魚店
活魚

I CAN SEE WATER COMING OUT OF THE TIP AT THE TOP!
WOW, IT'S STILL ALIVE!

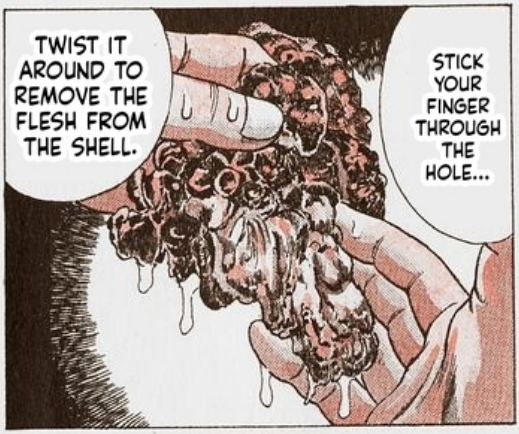
YOU REALLY KNOW YOUR STUFF! YOU'RE LIKE A SCHOLAR, NONAKA-KUN!
NO... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
OKAY, I'LL BUY THIS.
IT SUCKS IN WATER THROUGH ONE OF THE TWO PROTRUSIONS AT THE TOP AND EXPELS IT THROUGH THE OTHER.
IN THIS WAY, IT ABSORBS PLANKTON AND ORGANIC MATTER IN THE WATER AS NUTRIENTS.
民宿
浜屋
ALRIGHT, LET'S GO.
THERE'S A FRIEND OF MINE NEARBY WHO RUNS A BED-AND-BREAKFAST. I'VE ARRANGED TO USE THEIR KITCHEN.

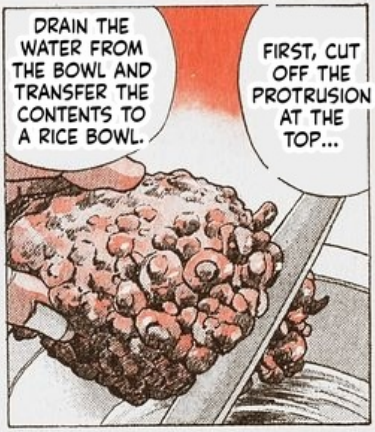
14

NONAKA USED TO HELP OUT IN THE KITCHEN A LOT DURING THE BUSY SUMMER SEASON.
YOUR KNIFE SKILLS ARE AS IMPRESSIVE AS EVER.
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN NONAKA SUBDUED THREE THUGS WHO WERE HARASSING A GIRL STAYING AT OUR PLACE AND TURNED THEM OVER TO THE POLICE.
NONAKA IS ACTUALLY QUITE THE PASSIONATE GUY, YOU KNOW.
15
MAKO, YOU'VE DISCOVERED YET ANOTHER SIDE TO NONAKA, HAVEN'T YOU?
IS NONAKA GOOD AT FIGHTING?!
へえっ!



NONAKA, LEAVE THE BLACK ROCKFISH STEW TO ME.
YOU TAKE CARE OF THE SEA SQUIRT...
SURE THING.


STICK YOUR FINGER THROUGH THE HOLE...
TWIST IT AROUND TO REMOVE THE FLESH FROM THE SHELL.

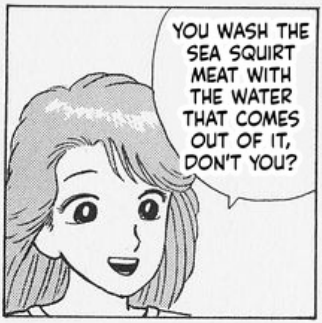

FIRST, CUT OFF THE PROTRUSION AT THE TOP...
DRAIN THE WATER FROM THE BOWL AND TRANSFER THE CONTENTS TO A RICE BOWL.

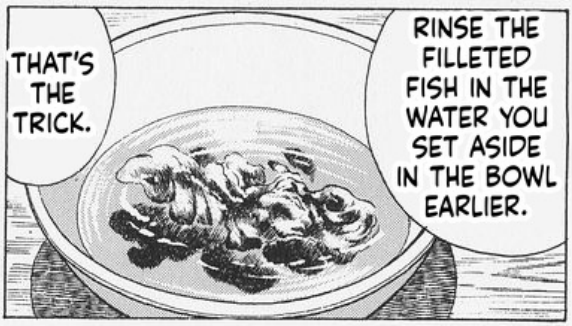
OH, IT'S A PALE ORANGE COLOR.

16

WHEN YOU CUT VERTICALLY INTO ITS BODY...
YOU CAN SEE THE BLACK INNARDS IN THE MIDDLE, RIGHT? REMOVE THOSE.

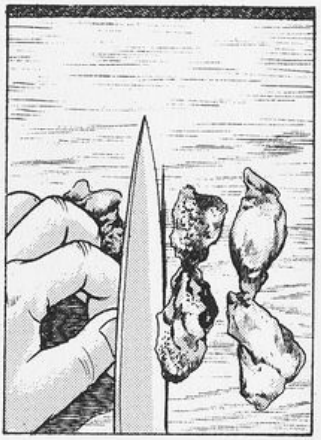
CUT OFF THE TOP AND REMOVE THE CONTENTS.


YOU WASH THE SEA SQUIRT MEAT WITH THE WATER THAT COMES OUT OF IT, DON'T YOU?


THAT'S THE TRICK.
RINSE THE FILLETED FISH IN THE WATER YOU SET ASIDE IN THE BOWL EARLIER.

SEA SQUIRT AND CUCUMBER GO REALLY WELL TOGETHER.
THEY SAY, "DON'T EAT SEA SQUIRT WITHOUT CUCUMBER," SO...

NEXT, SLICE THE CUCUMBER INTO THIN SLICES.
ONCE YOU'VE CUT THE MEAT INTO CHUNKS...



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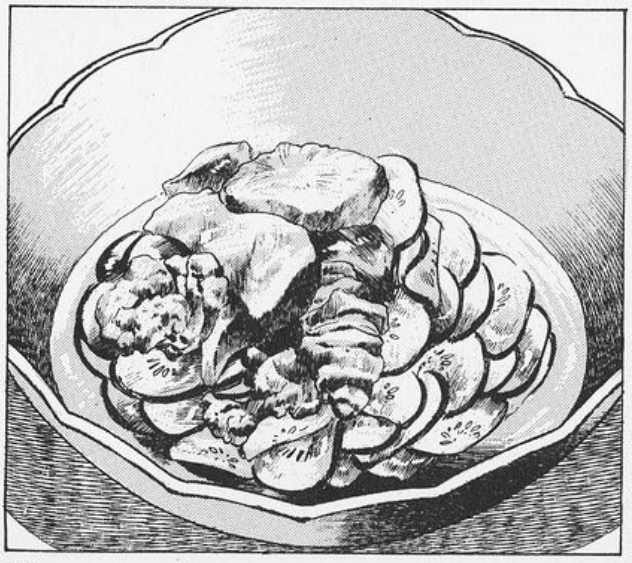
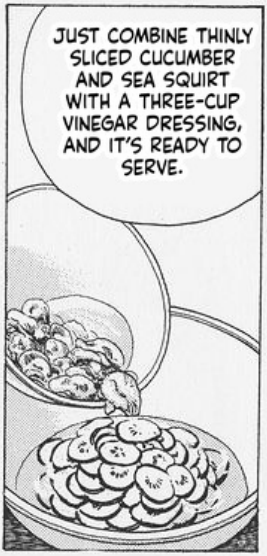
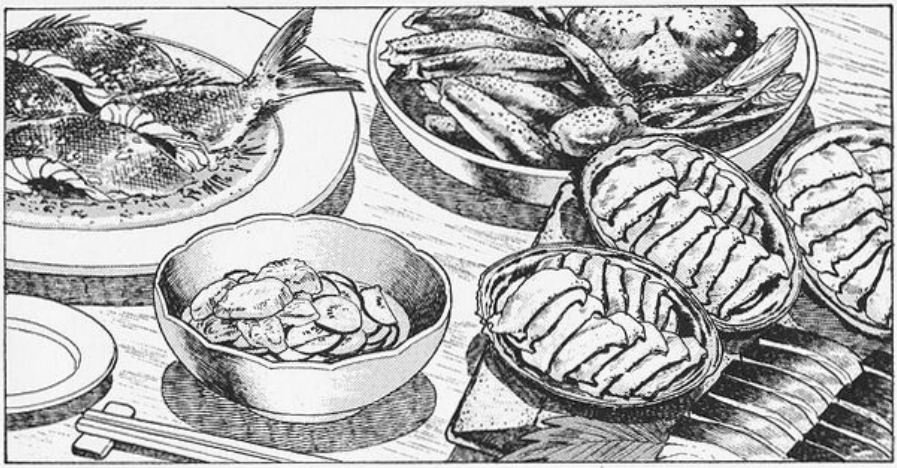
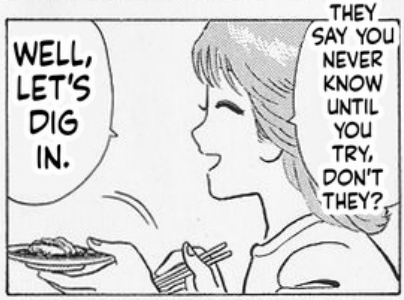



JUST COMBINE THINLY SLICED CUCUMBER AND SEA SQUIRT WITH A THREE-CUP VINEGAR DRESSING, AND IT'S READY TO SERVE.

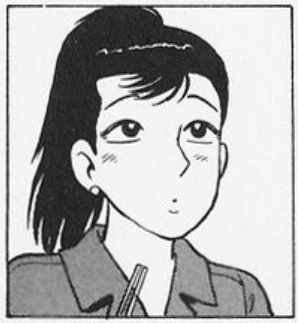


JUST THINKING ABOUT THAT SIGHT MAKES ME FEEL SICK...

I THINK I'LL START BY TRYING THE SEA SQUIRT AND CUCUMBER SALAD.


THEY SAY YOU NEVER KNOW UNTIL YOU TRY, DON'T THEY?
WELL, LET'S DIG IN.

18



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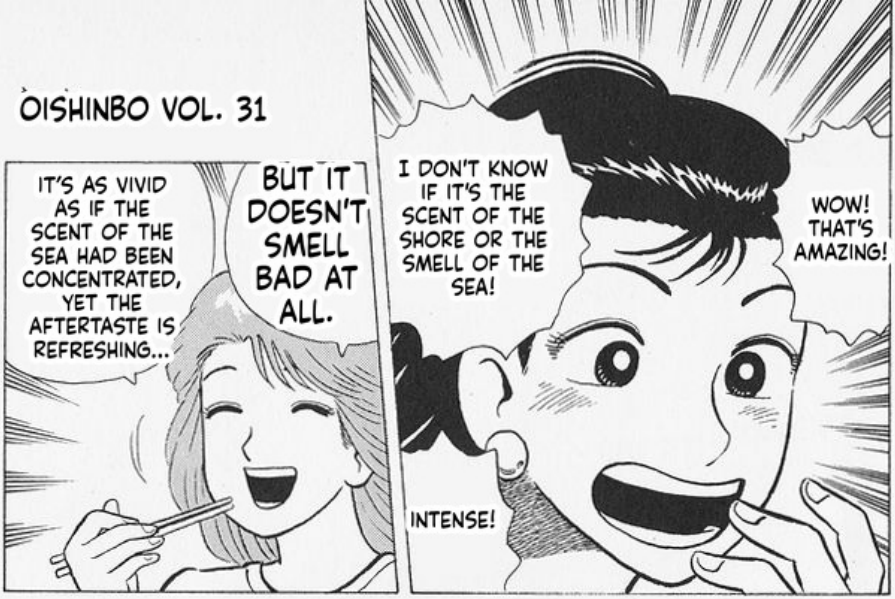
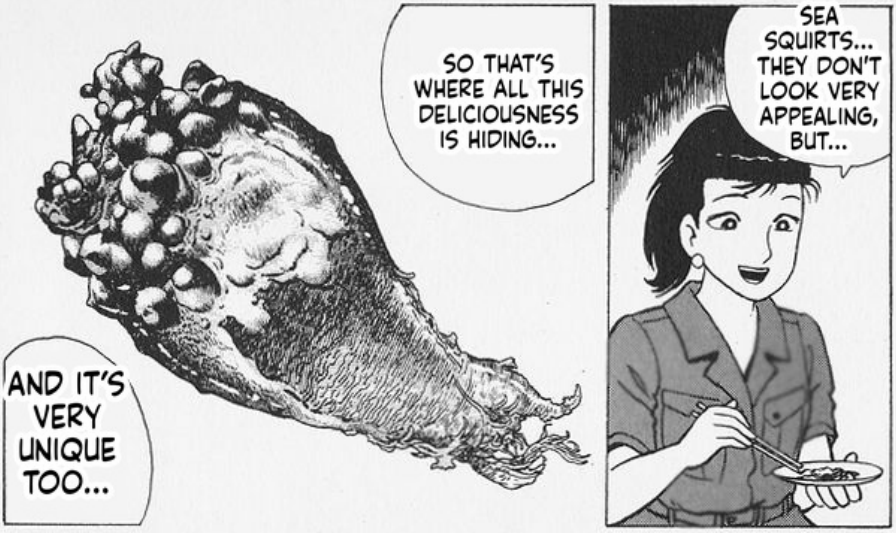
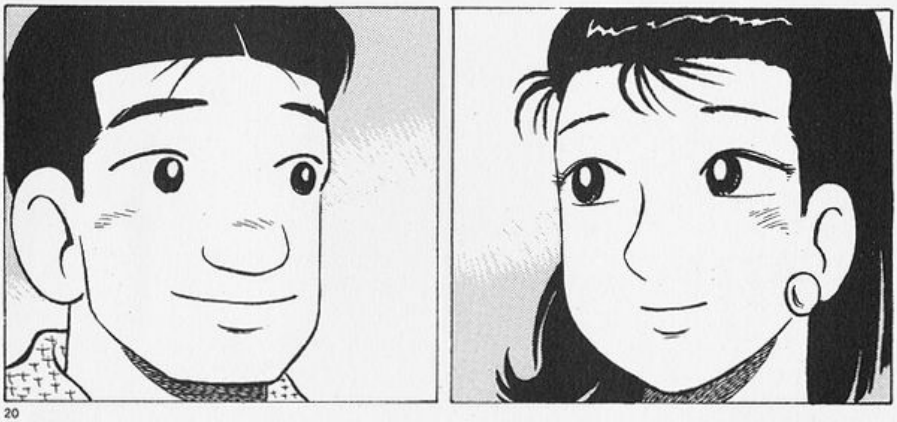

WOW! THAT'S AMAZING!
I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S THE SCENT OF THE SHORE OR THE SMELL OF THE SEA!
INTENSE!
BUT IT DOESN'T SMELL BAD AT ALL.
IT'S AS VIVID AS IF THE SCENT OF THE SEA HAD BEEN CONCENTRATED, YET THE AFTERTASTE IS REFRESHING...

IT REALLY TASTES LIKE SUMMER, DOESN'T IT?
IT HAS TO BE FRESH SEA SQUIRT, AND NOTHING ELSE WILL DO.
JUST A FEW HOURS AFTER DEATH, SUBSTANCES THAT GIVE OFF A FOUL ODOR BEGIN TO FORM INSIDE THE BODY.

19

SO THAT'S WHY YOU WENT OUT OF YOUR WAY TO BUY LIVE SEA SQUIRTS, NONAKA-KUN?
IT HAS A UNIQUE FLAVOR I'VE NEVER TASTED BEFORE, BUT IT HAS A NICE CRUNCH TO IT AND TASTES GREAT.
WOW, I'M SO HAPPY! I'M GLAD YOU LIKE IT, MAKO!


SEA SQUIRTS... THEY DON'T LOOK VERY APPEALING, BUT...
SO THAT'S WHERE ALL THIS DELICIOUSNESS IS HIDING...
AND IT'S VERY UNIQUE TOO...

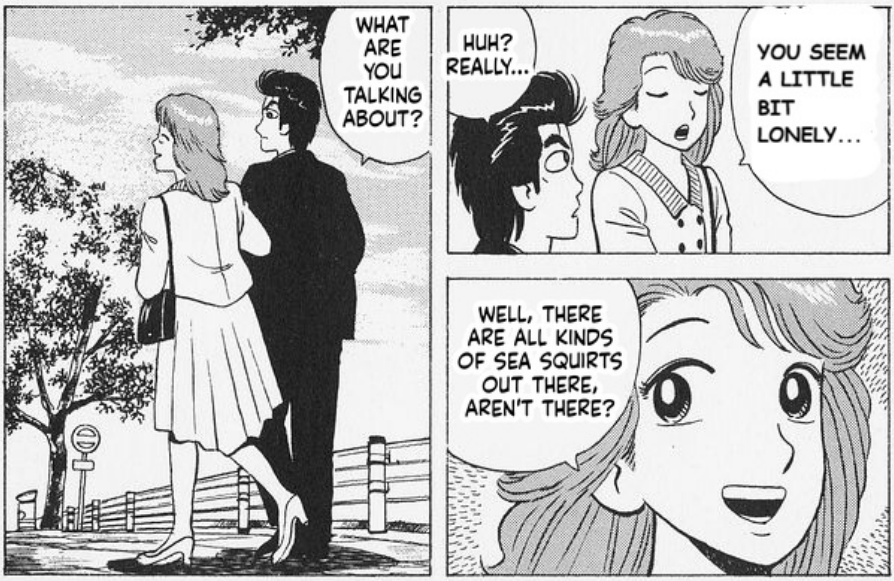


20

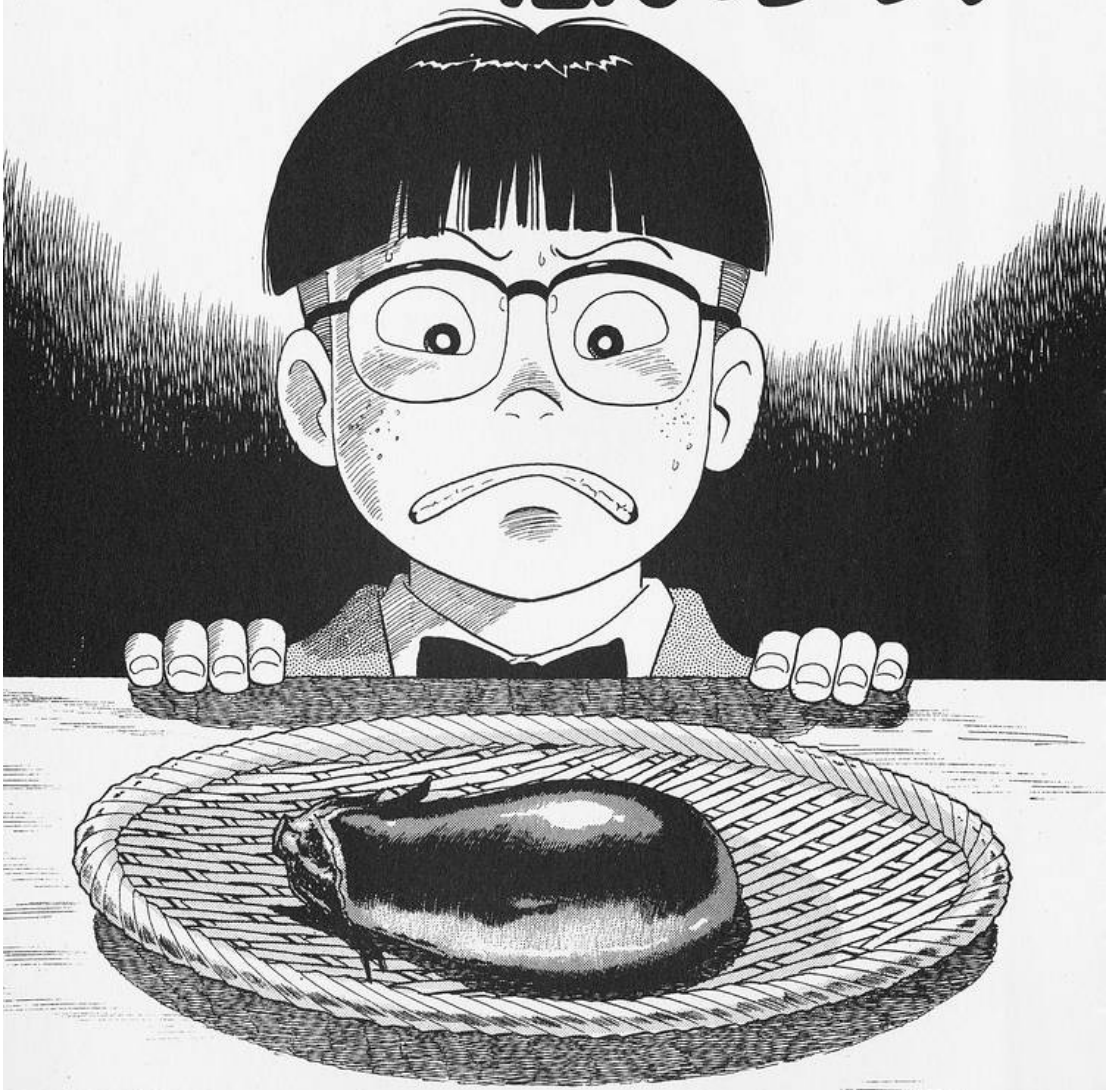
ビビッ
YAMAOKA-SAN, KURITA-SAN!
MAZAKA
HE'S SHOWING OFF HIS SKILLS...
WE'RE ABOUT TO THROW A HUGE PARTY WITH ALL OUR FRIENDS...
NONAKA?
HEY
21
HAA...
HEH.
IT'S OBVIOUSLY HIM—MY BOYFRIEND, OF COURSE.

ブルル
SEE YOU LATER!
I'M SORRY, MR. YAMAOKA. I CAN'T MARRY YOU.
AFTER ALL, SEA SQUIRTS TASTE BETTER WHEN THEY'RE FRESHLY HARVESTED.
AH, THAT'S A RELIEF.
B... BYE.

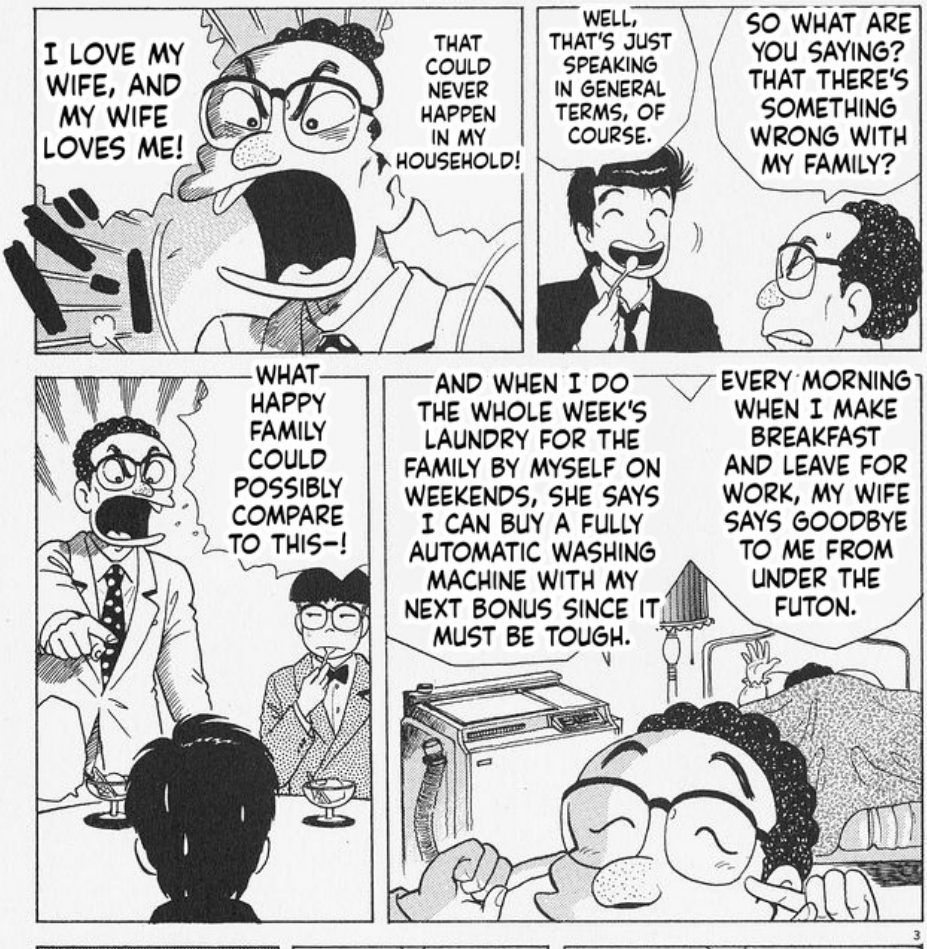
22


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
HUH? REALLY...
YOU SEEM A LITTLE BIT LONELY...
WELL, THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF SEA SQUIRTS OUT THERE, AREN'T THERE?

第2話 良いナス、悪いナス



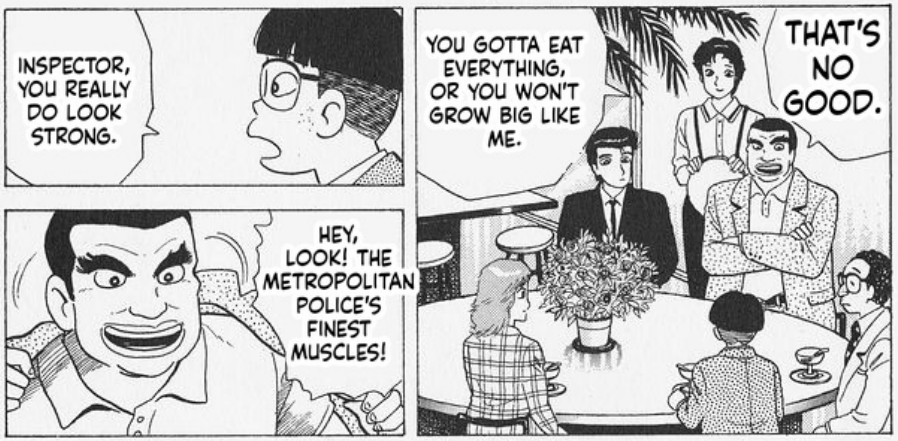
ACTUALLY, I'M KIND OF STUCK...
ICE CREAM
UTAKO
アイスクリームハウス
WHAT DOESN'T HE LIKE?
ISN'T THERE SOME WAY TO FIX IT?
HITOSHI IS A PICKY EATER, YOU SEE.
2
KIDS RAISED IN WARM, HEALTHY, HAPPY HOMES APPARENTLY DON'T HAVE FOOD AVERSIONS.
THEY SAY CHILDREN'S PICKY EATING IS THE PARENTS' FAULT, RIGHT?
THE PROBLEM TODAY IS THE EGGPLANT.
WELL, THERE'S A LOT, BUT...
HMM...


I LOVE MY WIFE, AND MY WIFE LOVES ME!
THAT COULD NEVER HAPPEN IN MY HOUSEHOLD!
WELL, THAT'S JUST SPEAKING IN GENERAL TERMS, OF COURSE.
SO WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THAT THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH MY FAMILY?
WHAT HAPPY FAMILY COULD POSSIBLY COMPARE TO THIS—!
AND WHEN I DO THE WHOLE WEEK'S LAUNDRY FOR THE FAMILY BY MYSELF ON WEEKENDS, SHE SAYS I CAN BUY A FULLY AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINE WITH MY NEXT BONUS SINCE IT MUST BE TOUGH.
EVERY MORNING WHEN I MAKE BREAKFAST AND LEAVE FOR WORK, MY WIFE SAYS GOODBYE TO ME FROM UNDER THE FUTON.
3
GO ON, HITOSHI, TELL HIM.
I CAN'T WAIT FOR THAT, THIS IS URGENT.
I THINK HE'LL GROW OUT OF IT NATURALLY AS HE GETS OLDER...
BUT SURELY IT'S FINE IF HE HAS SOME LIKES AND DISLIKES.

THIS YEAR WE HAD A BUMPER CROP OF EGGPLANT, SO THERE'S A LOT OF IT.
WE'RE GROWING VARIOUS VEGETABLES, BUT...
ACTUALLY, WE'RE GROWING A GARDEN AT SCHOOL,
EVERYONE IN MY CLASS WILL FIND OUT I CAN'T EAT EGGPLANT!
AND WE'RE ALL GOING TO EAT VEGETABLES FROM THE GARDEN THEN.
SO THERE'S A HARVEST FESTIVAL NEXT SATURDAY,
4
I WON'T BE ABLE TO BECOME CLASS REP -!
I'M IN TROUBLE!
CLASS REP?
NOT LIKE IT'S SOMETHING I'D BE TROUBLED BY IF MY CLASSMATES KNEW.
IT CAN'T BE HELPED, IT'S

IF EVERYONE FOUND OUT I CAN'T EAT EGGPLANT, FEWER PEOPLE WOULD VOTE FOR ME.
BUT I JUST CAN'T DO EGGPLANT...
I TRAINED MYSELF TO SWALLOW GREEN PEPPERS AND CARROTS I HATED WITHOUT BREATHING THROUGH MY NOSE DURING SCHOOL LUNCH, SO I COULD SOMEHOW GET THROUGH THEM.
BEING MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY TOUGH IS WHAT GETS YOU ELECTED CLASS REPRESENTATIVE.
THAT'S RIGHT! BEING SMART, HANDSOME,
CLASS REP ELECTIONS ARE DECIDED BY SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
5
IF EVERYONE FOUND OUT I'M SUCH A WEAK MAN WHO CAN'T EAT CERTAIN THINGS...
WELL, BEING SMART AND HANDSOME RUNS IN MY FAMILY.
I'M CONFIDENT ABOUT THE FIRST TWO, BUT...
YOU'RE ASKING FOR MY HELP FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
HOW STUPID~~ WHAT KIND OF CLASS REP IS THAT!

ARE YOU TRYING TO HINDER HITOSHI FROM WALKING THE ELITE PATH?!
THOSE WHO WOULD BE ELITE MUST ACCUMULATE EXPERIENCE STANDING ABOVE OTHERS AND GUIDING THEM FROM CHILDHOOD.
HITOSHI IS SOMEONE WHO MUST FOLLOW THE ELITE COURSE, JUST LIKE ME!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, RIDICULOUS!
HEY, HEY!
I'LL ARREST ALL OF YOU!!!
YOU HAD ALL BETTER QUIT FIGHTING IN MY GIRLFRIEND'S SHOP!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU CALLING ELITE?!
Y-YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!
6
WHAT, WHAT, PICKY EATING?
OH, INSPECTOR NAKAMATSU.


INSPECTOR, YOU REALLY DO LOOK STRONG.
HEY, LOOK! THE METROPOLITAN POLICE'S FINEST MUSCLES!
YOU GOTTA EAT EVERYTHING, OR YOU WON'T GROW BIG LIKE ME.
THAT'S NO GOOD.

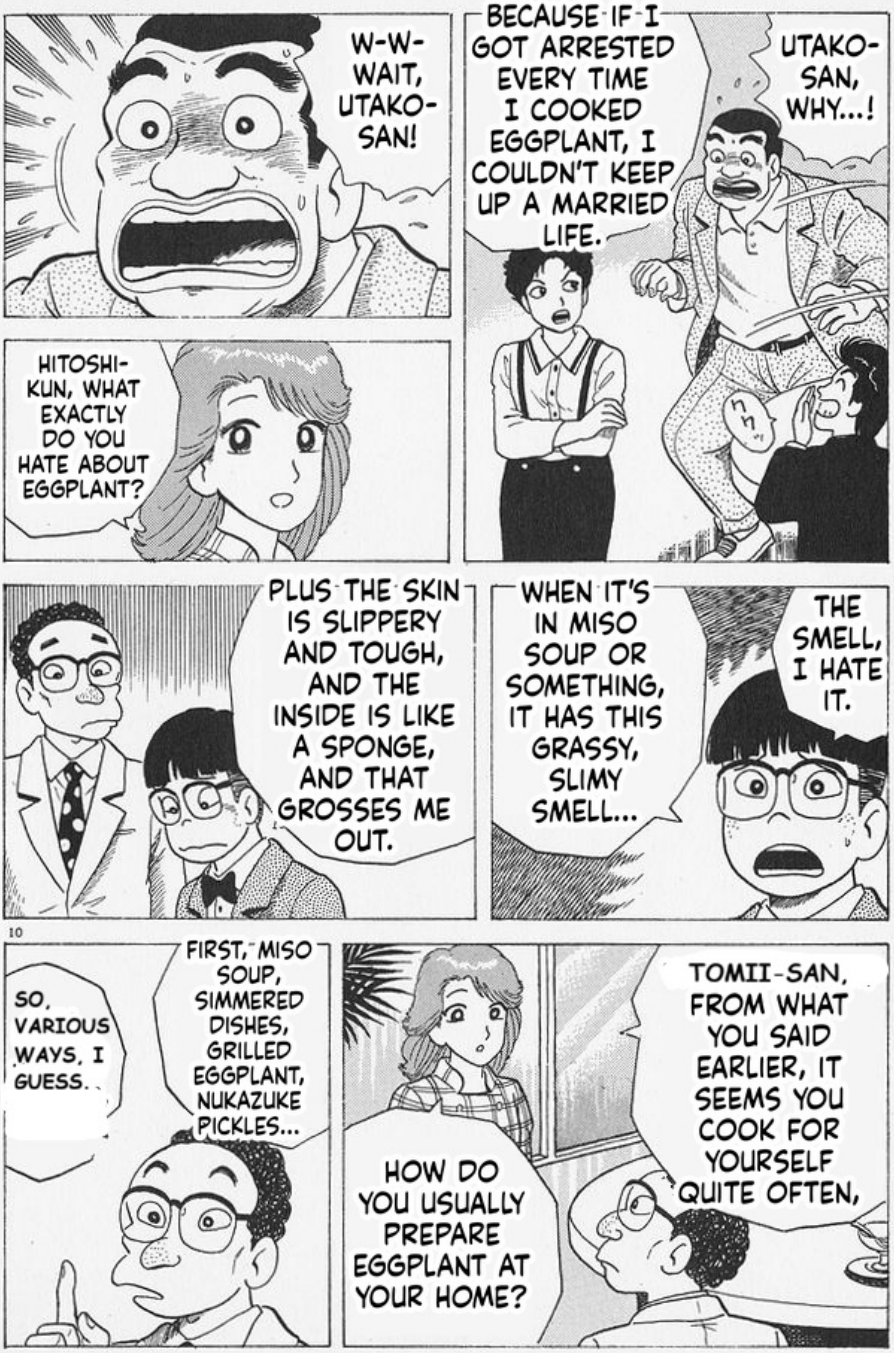
HIS HEAD'S EMPTY IN EXCHANGE, THOUGH...
NO PICKY EATING—EAT EVERYTHING AND YOU'LL GET SUPER MUSCULAR!

7

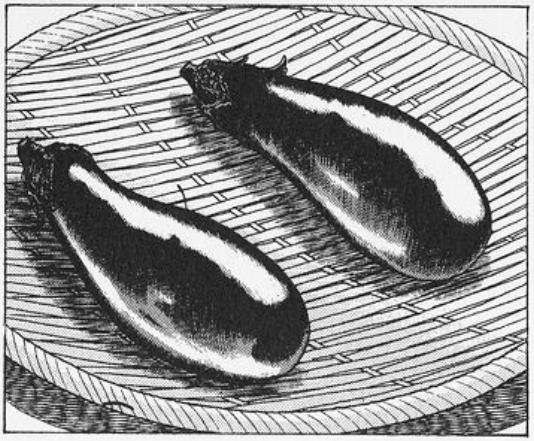
EGGPLANT.
ゴゲグガギ
BY THE WAY, KID, WHAT DON'T YOU LIKE?
ドサ

WELL, DETECTIVE NAKAMATSU.
HUH?
SINCE YOU WERE BORN A JAPANESE MAN, YOU MUST NOT EAT EGGPLANTS--!
GOOD FOR YOU! YOU'RE A GOOD BOY!
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT...
YOU DON'T KNOW THAT EGGPLANTS TURN INTO MONSTERS?
THAT'S RIDICULOUS.
I HATE EGGPLANTS TOO--!
8
IT'S TO OFFER TO THE SPIRITS OF ANCESTORS WHO RETURN DURING OBON.
YES, THAT WAS WHEN I WAS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
YOU MAKE THEM INTO SHAPES LIKE HORSES AND COWS AND FLOAT THEM DOWN THE RIVER.
DURING OBON, YOU STICK DISPOSABLE CHOPSTICKS INTO EGGPLANTS AND CUCUMBERS,
EGGPLANTS WILL TURN INTO MONSTERS, YOU SAY?

DOZENS, HUNDREDS OF EGGPLANT COWS AND HORSES APPEARED AND DANCED AROUND ME ALL NIGHT...!
THAT VERY NIGHT!
うーん
うーん…
SO, I ATE FIFTY.
I WAS MAKING EGGPLANT COWS WITH ALL MY FRIENDS, AND ONE OF THEM SAID HE'D GIVE A HUNDRED YEN IF I ATE TEN RAW EGGPLANTS.
THAT'S GREAT! EVEN IF YOU HATE EGGPLANTS, YOU CAN BECOME LIKE THE INSPECTOR!
HOW RIDICULOUS!
OF COURSE! ANYONE WOULD FEEL SICK IF THEY ATE FIFTY RAW EGGPLANTS!
EVER SINCE THEN, I CAN'T EVEN STAND THE SIGHT OF EGGPLANTS.
9
I WONDER IF I SHOULD BREAK OFF MY ENGAGEMENT WITH NAKAMATSU.
GASP
I'LL THROW THEM IN JAIL FOR YOU!
IF ANYONE TRIES TO FORCE A MONK TO EAT EGGPLANTS, CONTACT ME RIGHT AWAY!


W-W-WAIT, UTAKO-SAN!
BECAUSE IF I GOT ARRESTED EVERY TIME I COOKED EGGPLANT, I COULDN'T KEEP UP A MARRIED LIFE.
UTAKO-SAN, WHY...!
HITOSHI-KUN, WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU HATE ABOUT EGGPLANT?
PLUS THE SKIN IS SLIPPERY AND TOUGH, AND THE INSIDE IS LIKE A SPONGE, AND THAT GROSSES ME OUT.
WHEN IT'S IN MISO SOUP OR SOMETHING, IT HAS THIS GRASSY, SLIMY SMELL...
THE SMELL, I HATE IT.
10
SO, VARIOUS WAYS, I GUESS.
FIRST, MISO SOUP, SIMMERED DISHES, GRILLED EGGPLANT, NUKAZUKE PICKLES...
HOW DO YOU USUALLY PREPARE EGGPLANT AT YOUR HOME?
TOMII-SAN, FROM WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER, IT SEEMS YOU COOK FOR YOURSELF QUITE OFTEN,

EVER SINCE THAT EGGPLANT CAME TO HAUNT ME, I HAVEN'T TOUCHED THE STUFF.
I TOLD YOU SO,
HOW DO YOU EAT EGGPLANT, INSPECTOR NAKAMATSU?
HMM...
THAT STUFF'S THE SAME RAW OR COOKED, IT'S NOT FIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION...
SO YOU ONLY EVER ATE IT RAW?!
GOOD GRIEF, THERE'S NO HELPING YOU.
SHALL WE HAVE AN EGGPLANT COOK-OFF THEN.
I... I'LL EAT IT. I'LL LEARN TO LOVE IT EVEN IF IT KILLS ME...
YAMAOKA-SAN...



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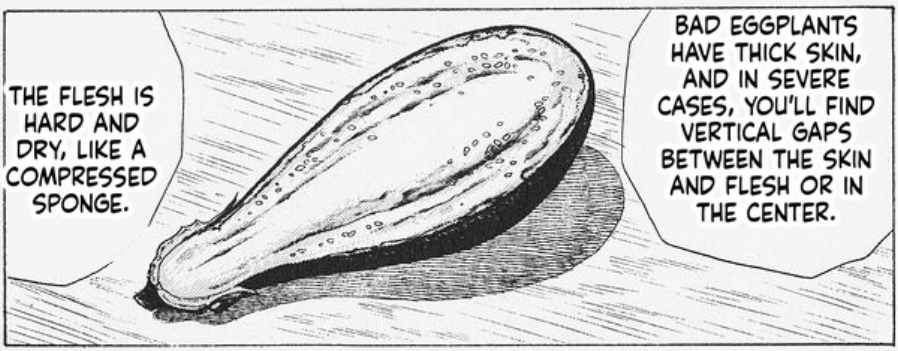
A GOOD EGGPLANT FEELS SUPPLE AND SPRINGY WHEN HELD.
A BAD ONE LACKS SPRINGINESS, HAS POOR LUSTER, AND FEELS LIGHT FOR ITS SIZE.
YOU REALLY HAVE TO CHOOSE CAREFULLY WHEN BUYING EGGPLANTS.

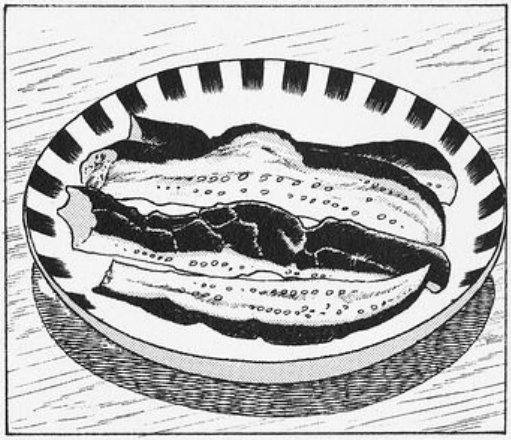
12

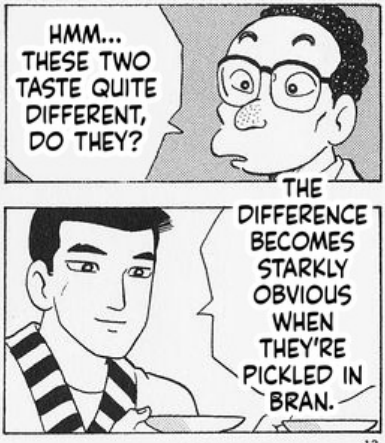
THE INSIDE IS MOIST, WITH A UNIFORM AMBER COLOR PACKED THROUGHOUT.
THE GOOD EGGPLANT HAS THIN SKIN.

QUITE A DIFFERENCE, ISN'T THERE?
AH, I SEE.

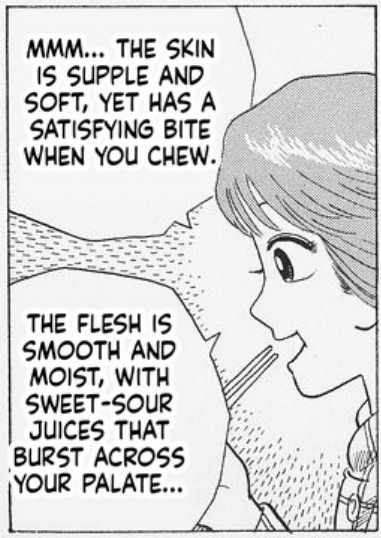
SPLIT ONE OPEN AND IT'S OBVIOUS AT A GLANCE.


THE FLESH IS HARD AND DRY, LIKE A COMPRESSED SPONGE.
BAD EGGPLANTS HAVE THICK SKIN, AND IN SEVERE CASES, YOU'LL FIND VERTICAL GAPS BETWEEN THE SKIN AND FLESH OR IN THE CENTER.




HMM... THESE TWO TASTE QUITE DIFFERENT, DO THEY?
THE DIFFERENCE BECOMES STARKLY OBVIOUS WHEN THEY'RE PICKLED IN BRAN.

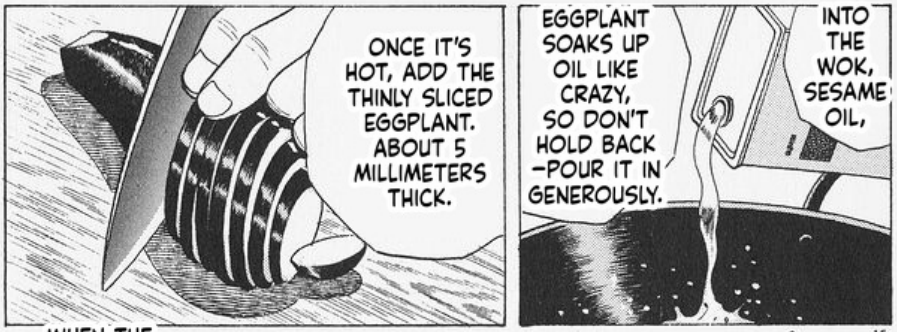
13


MMM... THE SKIN IS SUPPLE AND SOFT, YET HAS A SATISFYING BITE WHEN YOU CHEW.
THE FLESH IS SMOOTH AND MOIST, WITH SWEET-SOUR JUICES THAT BURST ACROSS YOUR PALATE...

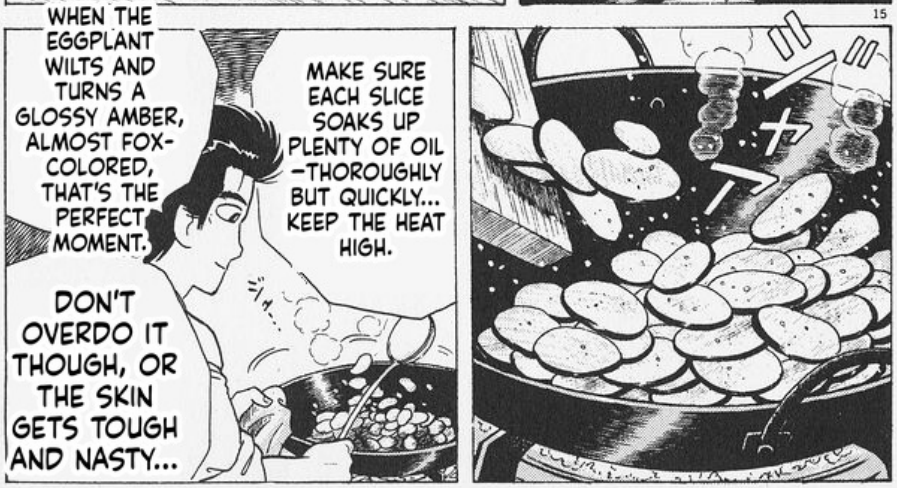
AND THE FLESH TRANSITIONS FROM PALE REDDISH-PURPLE TO PINK NEAR THE SKIN, WITH AN AMBER CENTER.
THE OUTER SKIN IS A VIVID DARK BLUE, THE INNER SKIN IS PURPLE, AND WHERE IT MEETS THE FLESH IS REDDISH-PURPLE.
THIS IS A GOOD EGGPLANT, VERY BEAUTIFUL.

SKIPPING AHEAD TO THE INSIDE, BUT THE FLESH IS DRY AND PARCHED.
THICK SKIN WITH DULL COLOR, NO GRADATION IN THE COLORING AT ALL.
THESE ARE THE BAD EGGPLANTS.
I HATE THAT WEIRDLY HARSH, GRASSY BITTERNESS.
THE FLESH IS HOLLOW AND DRY, SO IT DOESN'T EVEN PRODUCE ANY TASTY JUICES...
THE SKIN IS TOUGH AND CHEWY, WITH A BAD TEXTURE,
14
DUE TO PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES, THE EGGPLANTS DON'T FULLY RIPEN.
GOOD EGGPLANTS HAVE REALLY BECOME SCARCE LATELY.
WOW, THIS IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!
THE OIL DOESN'T SOAK INTO THE FLESH, SO IT ENDS UP DRY AND BLAND.
IF YOU USE THESE BAD EGGPLANTS CUT INTO CHUNKS FOR STIR-FRYING,

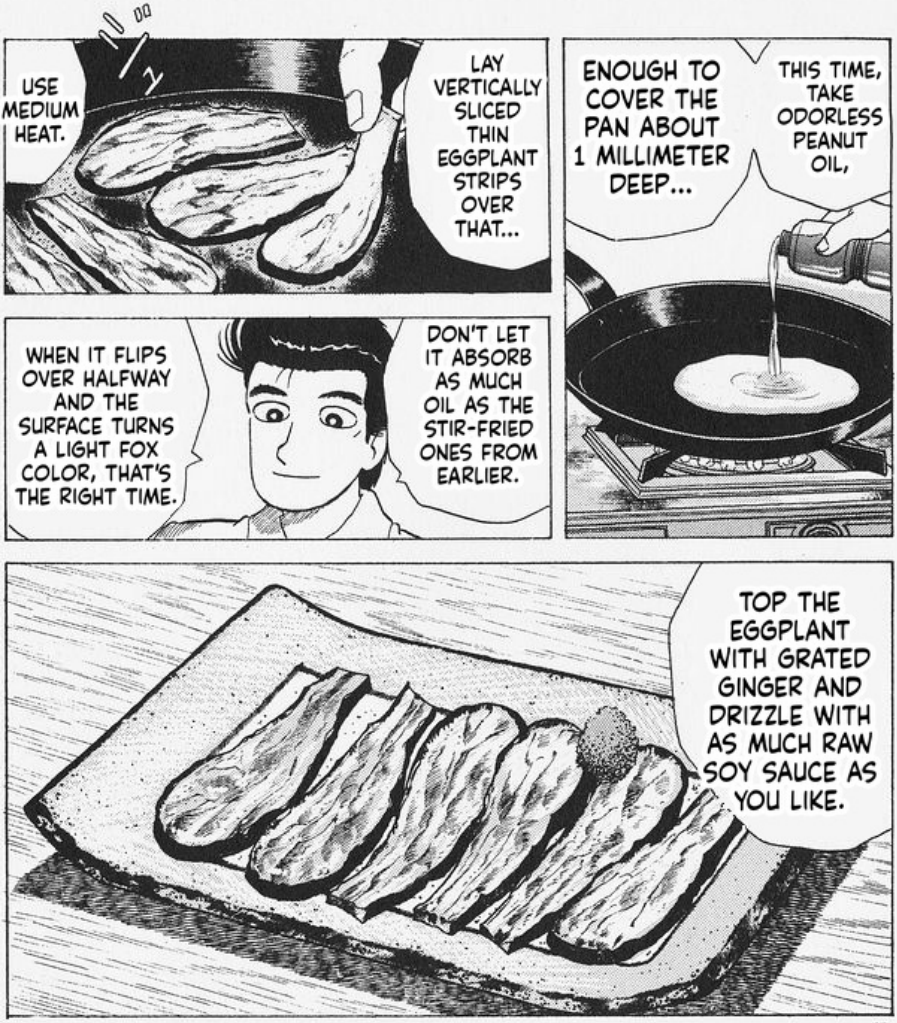
I WONDER IF I CAN MAKE A DISH THAT'LL TURN EVEN EGGPLANT HATERS INTO FANS.
EGGPLANT AND OIL ARE A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN.
NO WONDER YOU WOULDN'T THINK EGGPLANT COULD EVER TASTE GOOD.
IF NOT JUST HITOSHI, BUT ANYONE HAD TO EAT THIS BADLY COOKED EGGPLANT,

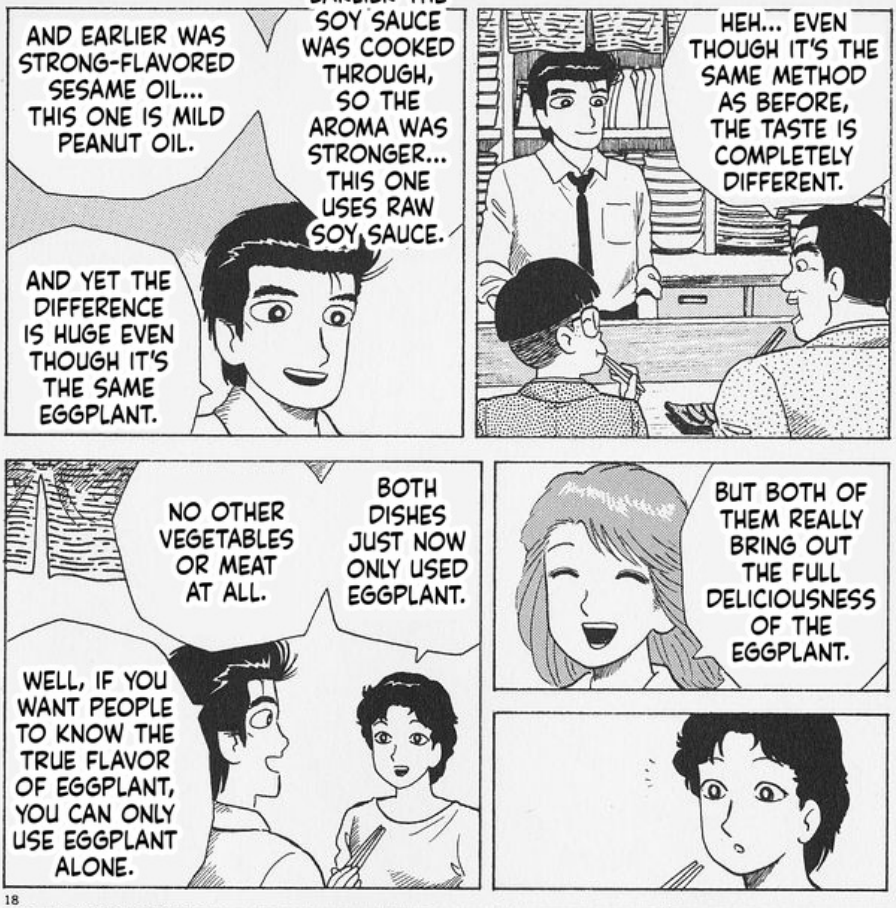

ONCE IT'S HOT, ADD THE THINLY SLICED EGGPLANT. ABOUT 5 MILLIMETERS THICK.
EGGPLANT SOAKS UP OIL LIKE CRAZY, SO DON'T HOLD BACK —POUR IT IN GENEROUSLY.
INTO THE WOK, SESAME OIL,

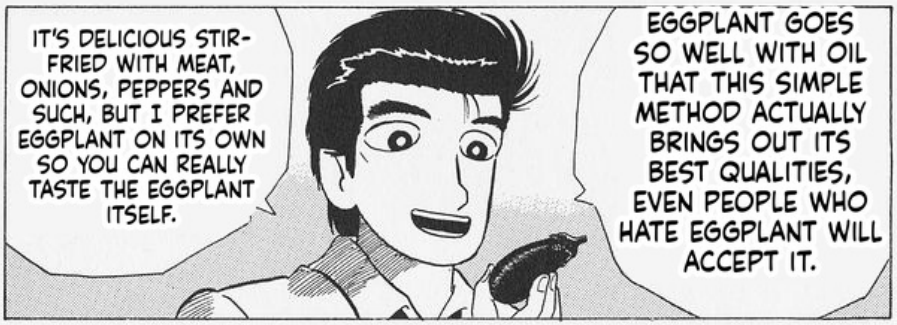
15

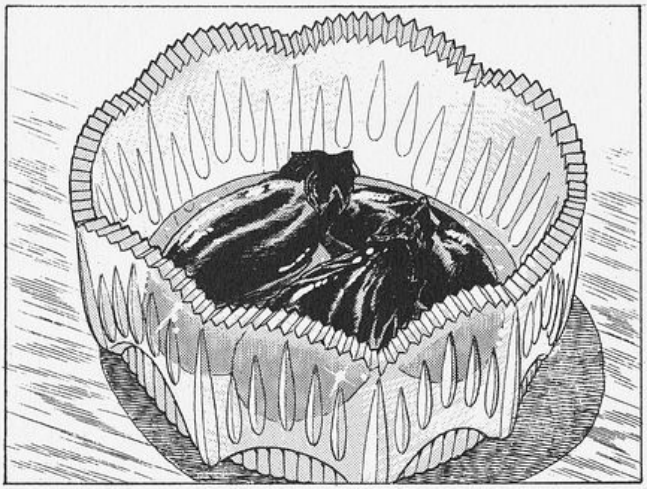

WHEN THE EGGPLANT WILTS AND TURNS A GLOSSY AMBER, ALMOST FOX-COLORED, THAT'S THE PERFECT MOMENT.
MAKE SURE EACH SLICE SOAKS UP PLENTY OF OIL —THOROUGHLY BUT QUICKLY... KEEP THE HEAT HIGH.
DON'T OVERDO IT THOUGH, OR THE SKIN GETS TOUGH AND NASTY...

YEAH, THIS REALLY WHETS THE APPETITE.
WOW, SMELLS GREAT.
NOW POUR THE SOY SAUCE ALL OVER AT ONCE.
HOT HOT HOT... BUT DELICIOUS!
THE AROMA OF SESAME OIL AND THE AROMA OF EGGPLANT BLEND TOGETHER...
16
THE ASTRINGENCY OF THE EGGPLANT AND THE ASTRINGENCY OF THE SESAME OIL CLASH TOGETHER,
AND THAT ACTUALLY CREATES A MELLOW FLAVOR.
THE BURNT AROMA OF THE SOY SAUCE IS IRRESISTIBLE TOO.
THIS WAY IT'S NOT BITTER AT ALL!
WHOA! EGGPLANT FLESH IS SWEET, HUH.


USE MEDIUM HEAT.
LAY VERTICALLY SLICED THIN EGGPLANT STRIPS OVER THAT...
ENOUGH TO COVER THE PAN ABOUT 1 MILLIMETER DEEP...
THIS TIME, TAKE ODORLESS PEANUT OIL,
WHEN IT FLIPS OVER HALFWAY AND THE SURFACE TURNS A LIGHT FOX COLOR, THAT'S THE RIGHT TIME.
DON'T LET IT ABSORB AS MUCH OIL AS THE STIR-FRIED ONES FROM EARLIER.
TOP THE EGGPLANT WITH GRATED GINGER AND DRIZZLE WITH AS MUCH RAW SOY SAUCE AS YOU LIKE.
17
THE SKIN IS SOFT AND DELICIOUS TOO!
THE SWEETNESS OF THE EGGPLANT FLESH IS IRRESISTIBLE!
THE FLESH BECOMES TENDER AND MELTS IN YOUR MOUTH...
OH MY! ANOTHER DIFFERENT FLAVOR!

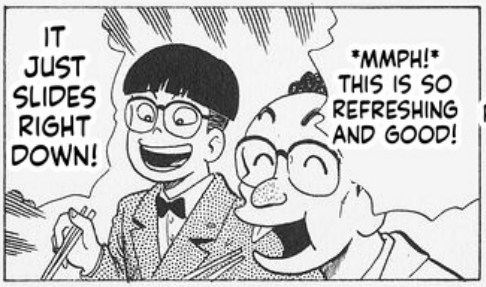

AND EARLIER WAS STRONG-FLAVORED SESAME OIL... THIS ONE IS MILD PEANUT OIL.
EARLIER THE SOY SAUCE WAS COOKED THROUGH, SO THE AROMA WAS STRONGER... THIS ONE USES RAW SOY SAUCE.
AND YET THE DIFFERENCE IS HUGE EVEN THOUGH IT'S THE SAME EGGPLANT.
HEH... EVEN THOUGH IT'S THE SAME METHOD AS BEFORE, THE TASTE IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
NO OTHER VEGETABLES OR MEAT AT ALL.
BOTH DISHES JUST NOW ONLY USED EGGPLANT.
WELL, IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW THE TRUE FLAVOR OF EGGPLANT, YOU CAN ONLY USE EGGPLANT ALONE.
BUT BOTH OF THEM REALLY BRING OUT THE FULL DELICIOUSNESS OF THE EGGPLANT.
18
WHEN YOU BOIL IT WITH OTHER THINGS, THE ASTRINGENCY OF THE EGGPLANT CAN RUIN THE FLAVOR OF THE OTHER INGREDIENTS.
OF COURSE IT'S DELICIOUS BOILED TOO, BUT COOKING EGGPLANT WELL THAT WAY IS PRETTY DIFFICULT.
AND THE SECRET SEEMS TO BE IN THE OIL.


IT'S DELICIOUS STIR-FRIED WITH MEAT, ONIONS, PEPPERS AND SUCH, BUT I PREFER EGGPLANT ON ITS OWN SO YOU CAN REALLY TASTE THE EGGPLANT ITSELF.
EGGPLANT GOES SO WELL WITH OIL THAT THIS SIMPLE METHOD ACTUALLY BRINGS OUT ITS BEST QUALITIES, EVEN PEOPLE WHO HATE EGGPLANT WILL ACCEPT IT.

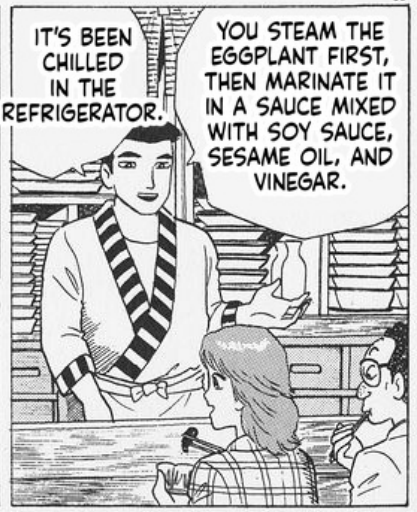


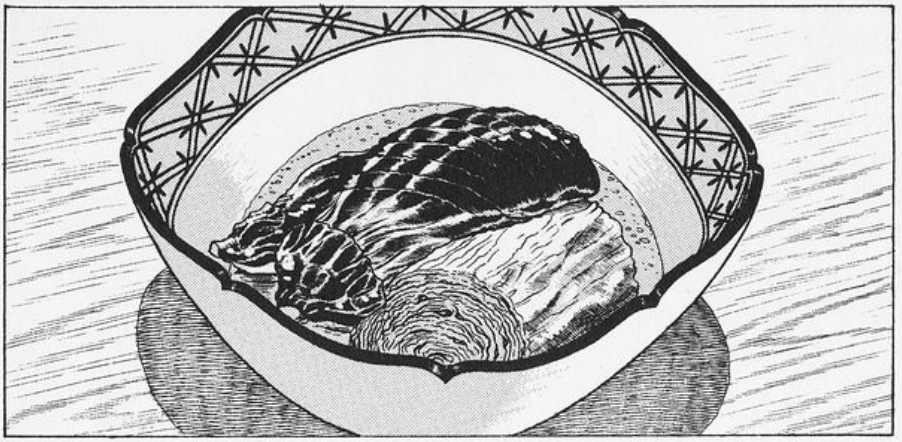
NEXT, PLEASE TRY THIS.

19


IT JUST SLIDES RIGHT DOWN!
MMPH! THIS IS SO REFRESHING AND GOOD!

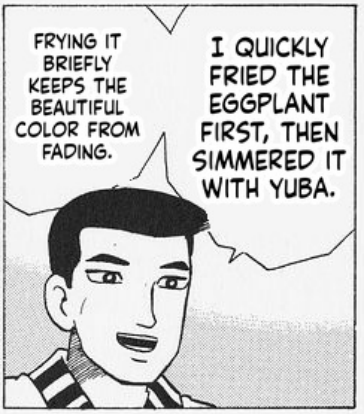
MAKES YOU WANT TO DRINK, DOESN'T IT!


IT'S BEEN CHILLED IN THE REFRIGERATOR.
YOU STEAM THE EGGPLANT FIRST, THEN MARINATE IT IN A SAUCE MIXED WITH SOY SAUCE, SESAME OIL, AND VINEGAR.



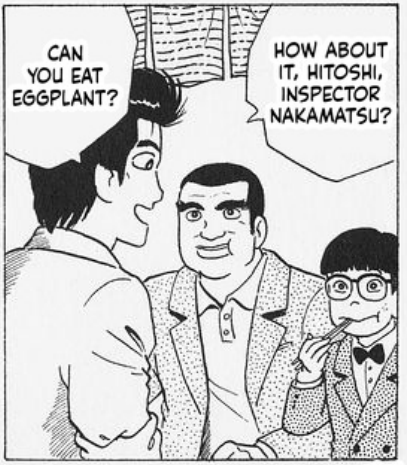
THE FRIED EGGPLANT HAS SOAKED UP PLENTY OF DASHI, AND IT'S ABSOLUTELY SUPERB!

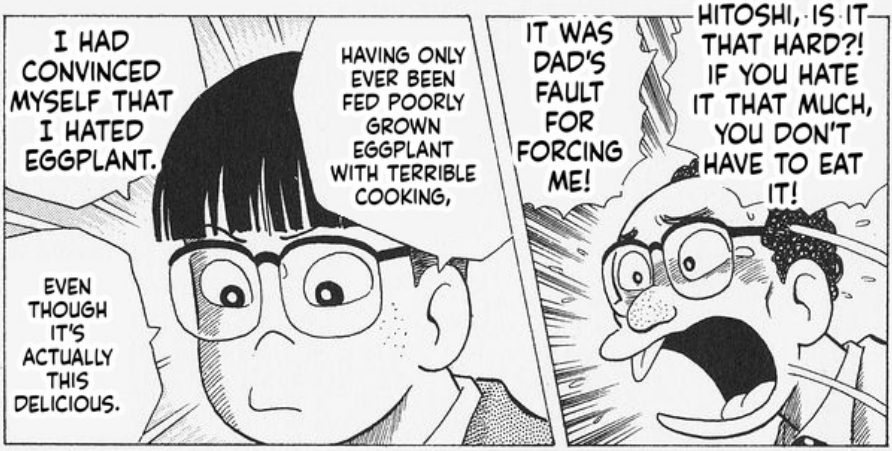
THIS IS AUTHENTIC JAPANESE CUISINE.

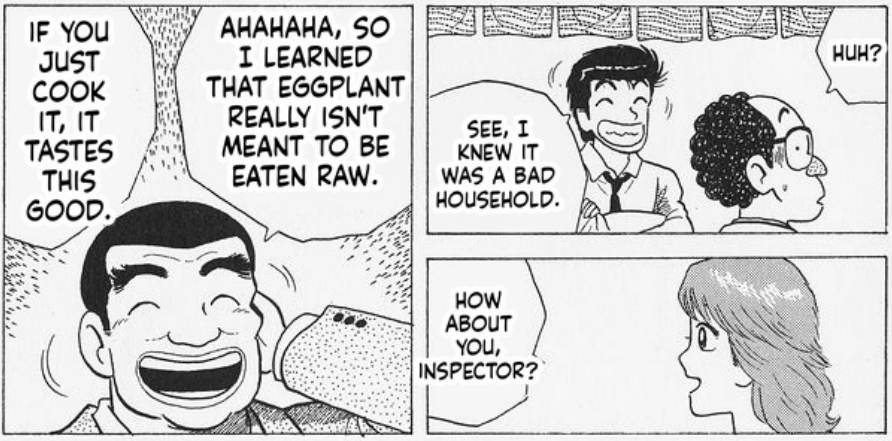

FRYING IT BRIEFLY KEEPS THE BEAUTIFUL COLOR FROM FADING.
I QUICKLY FRIED THE EGGPLANT FIRST, THEN SIMMERED IT WITH YUBA.

20

WHAT A PITIFUL CHILD I AM.

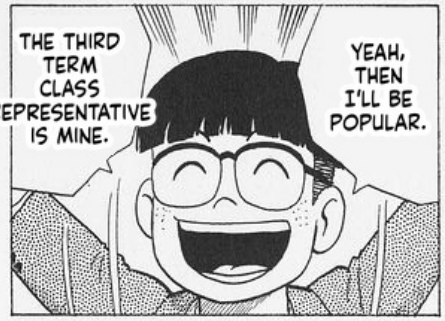

CAN YOU EAT EGGPLANT?
HOW ABOUT IT, HITOSHI, INSPECTOR NAKAMATSU?


I HAD CONVINCED MYSELF THAT I HATED EGGPLANT.
HAVING ONLY EVER BEEN FED POORLY GROWN EGGPLANT WITH TERRIBLE COOKING,
EVEN THOUGH IT'S ACTUALLY THIS DELICIOUS.
IT WAS DAD'S FAULT FOR FORCING ME!
HITOSHI, IS IT THAT HARD?! IF YOU HATE IT THAT MUCH, YOU DON'T HAVE TO EAT IT!

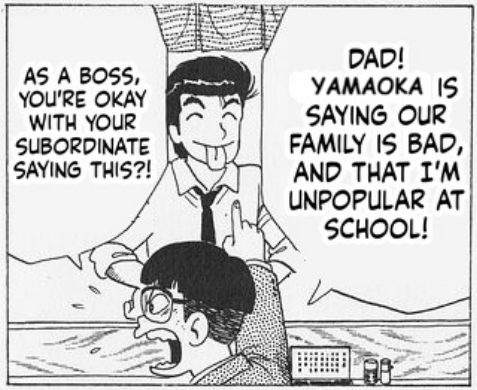

IF YOU JUST COOK IT, IT TASTES THIS GOOD.
AHAHAHA, SO I LEARNED THAT EGGPLANT REALLY ISN'T MEANT TO BE EATEN RAW.
HUH?
SEE, I KNEW IT WAS A BAD HOUSEHOLD.
HOW ABOUT YOU, INSPECTOR?

21

I GUESS YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE UP BEING THE DEMON NAKAMATSU AND SETTLE FOR BEING THE FOOL NAKAMATSU, INSTEAD.
GROOOAR -!
'JUST COOK IT AND IT'LL BE FINE'—WHAT AN UNINSPIRING ANSWER.
NO, I THINK IT WOULD TASTE EVEN BETTER IF YOU COOKED IT, UTAKO!


THE THIRD TERM CLASS REPRESENTATIVE IS MINE.
YEAH, THEN I'LL BE POPULAR.

AT THIS YEAR'S HARVEST FESTIVAL, I'LL MAKE WHAT YAMAOKA TAUGHT ME AND LET EVERYONE TRY IT.
GOOD FOR YOU, HITOSHI.

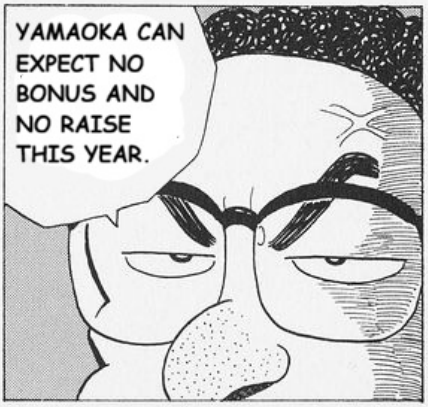

DAD! YAMAOKA IS SAYING OUR FAMILY IS BAD, AND THAT I'M UNPOPULAR AT SCHOOL!
AS A BOSS, YOU'RE OKAY WITH YOUR SUBORDINATE SAYING THIS?!

HITOSHI IS UNPOPULAR SO HE PROBABLY FAILED THE ELECTION.
HEHE... EVEN THOUGH HE FINALLY LEARNED TO EAT EGGPLANT...

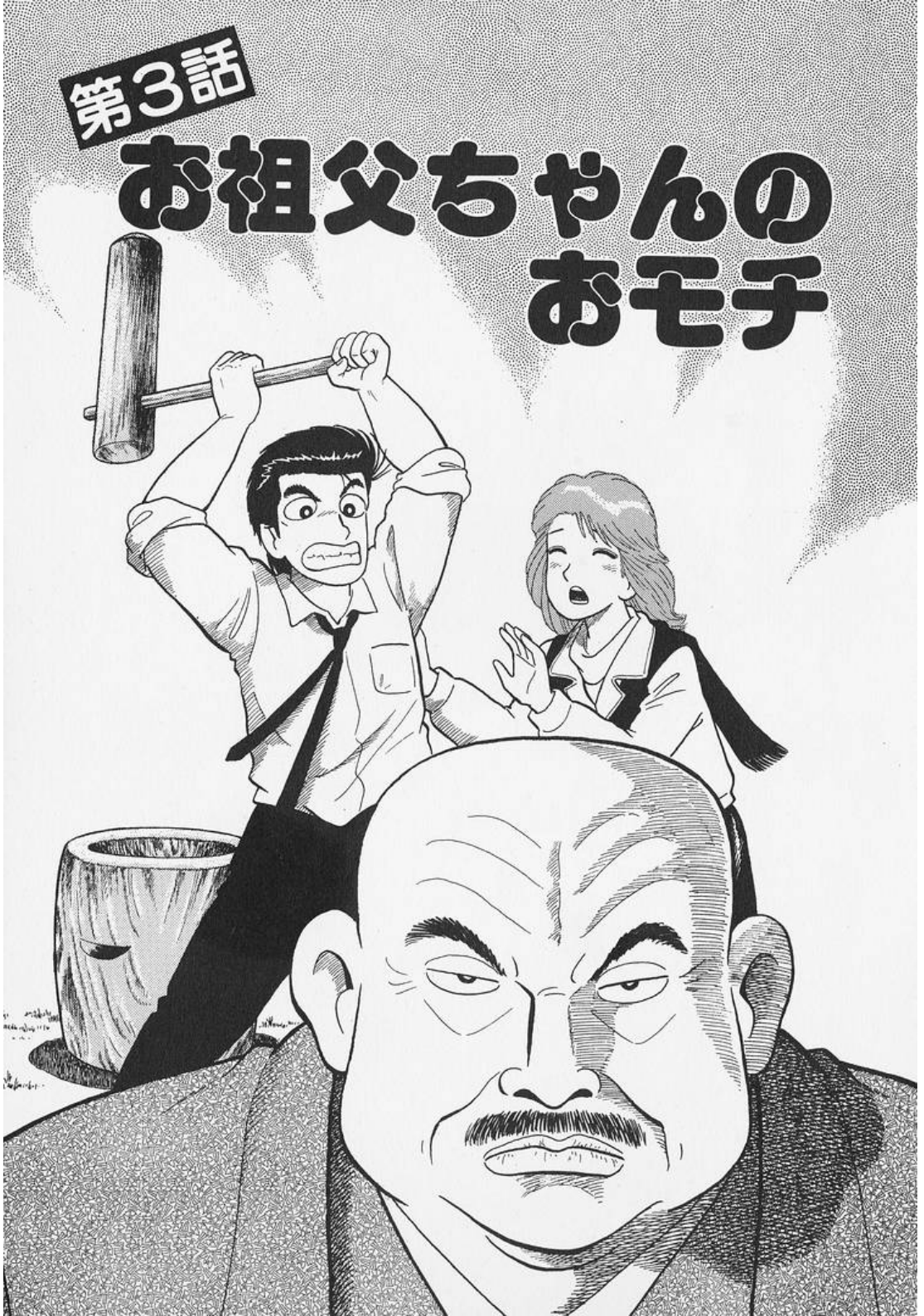
22

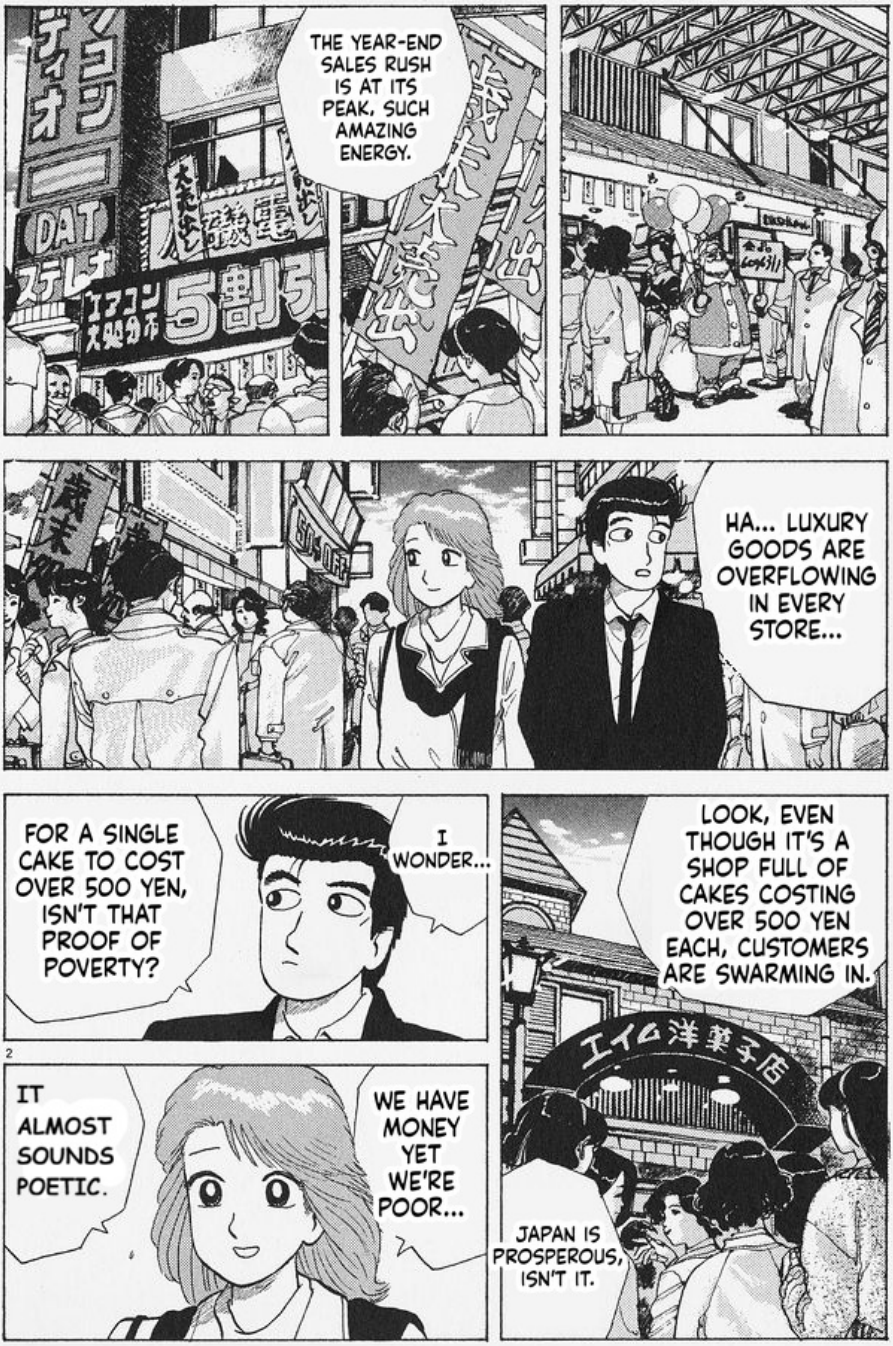
YOU SON OF A BITCH!
HEY NOW! ARE YOU EVEN HUMAN?!
ヤーイ

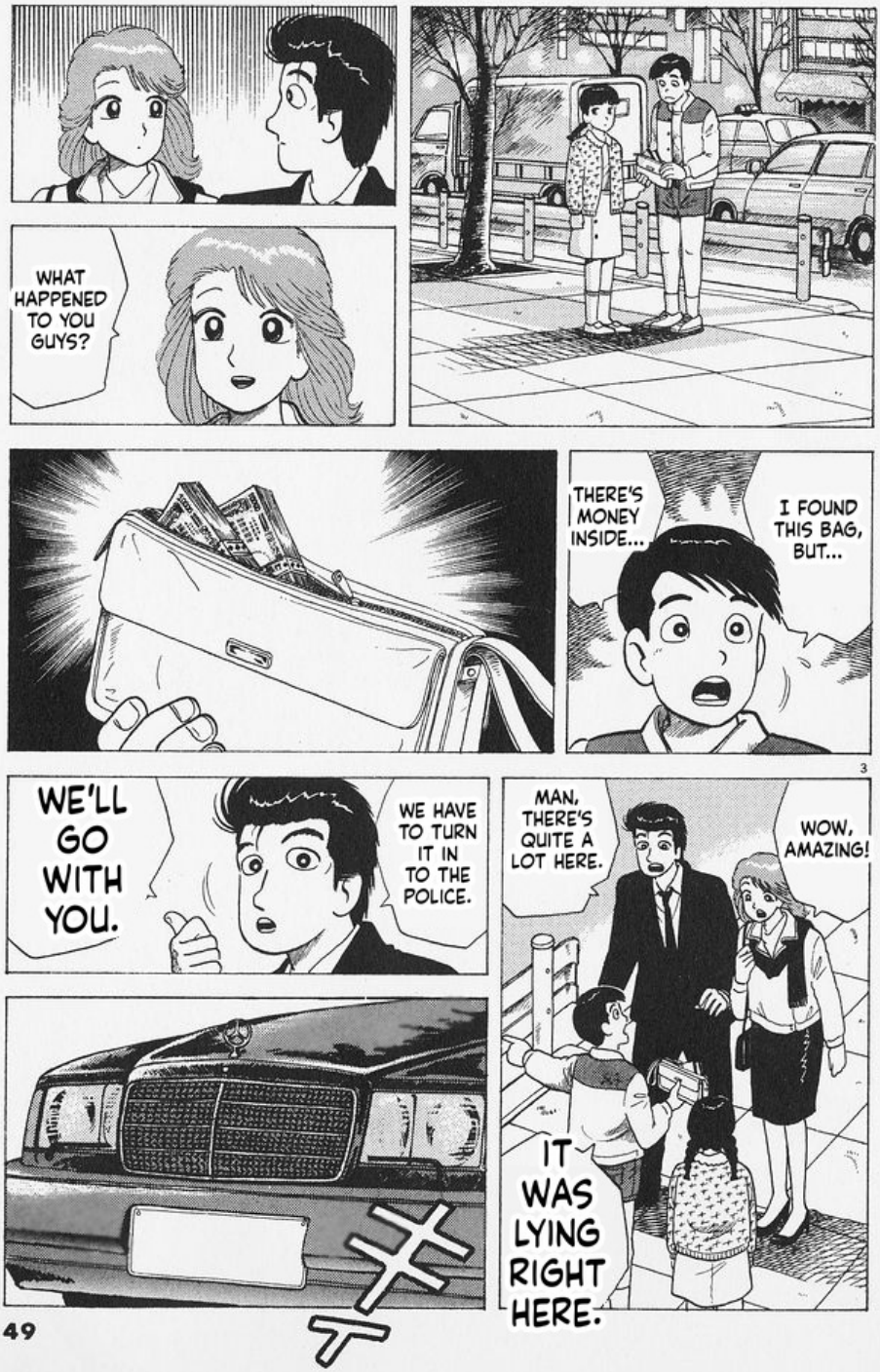
HITOSHI, DON'T WORRY.


YAMAOKA CAN EXPECT NO BONUS AND NO RAISE THIS YEAR.

第3話
お祖父ちゃんのおモチ

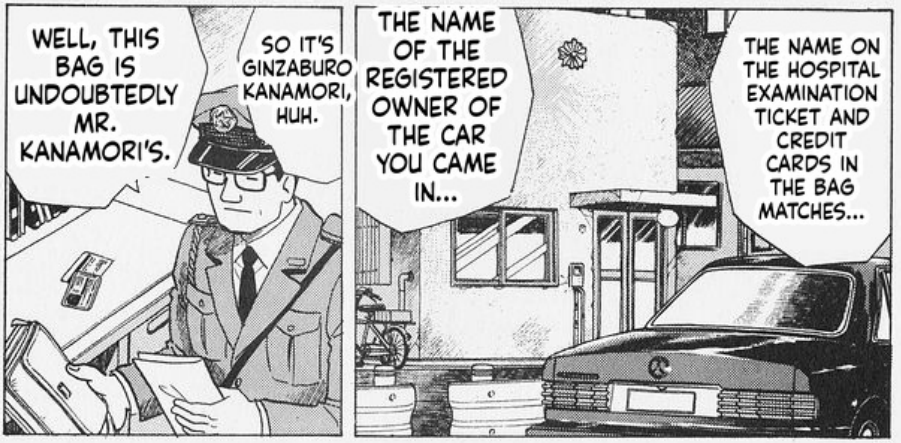



THE YEAR-END SALES RUSH IS AT ITS PEAK, SUCH AMAZING ENERGY.
DAT
ステレオ
5割引
HA... LUXURY GOODS ARE OVERFLOWING IN EVERY STORE...
FOR A SINGLE CAKE TO COST OVER 500 YEN, ISN'T THAT PROOF OF POVERTY?
I WONDER...
LOOK, EVEN THOUGH IT'S A SHOP FULL OF CAKES COSTING OVER 500 YEN EACH, CUSTOMERS ARE SWARMING IN.
エイム洋菓子店
2
IT ALMOST SOUNDS POETIC.
WE HAVE MONEY YET WE'RE POOR...
JAPAN IS PROSPEROUS, ISN'T IT.


WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU GUYS?
THERE'S MONEY INSIDE...
I FOUND THIS BAG, BUT...
3
WE'LL GO WITH YOU.
WE HAVE TO TURN IT IN TO THE POLICE.
MAN, THERE'S QUITE A LOT HERE.
WOW, AMAZING!
IT WAS LYING RIGHT HERE.

ヒョイ
!
WOW! WE FOUND IT, WE FOUND IT!
LOOK! I ALMOST LOST A FORTUNE BECAUSE OF YOU!
4
SHOW ME PROOF AT THE POLICE STATION, OR I WON'T HAND OVER THAT BAG.
THIS BAG BELONGS TO THESE KIDS.
YOU CAN'T JUST SNATCH IT!
DON'T BE STUPID, OUR COMPANY PRESIDENT'S...
SORRY, BUT I'M GLAD I FOUND YOU.

SHIT...

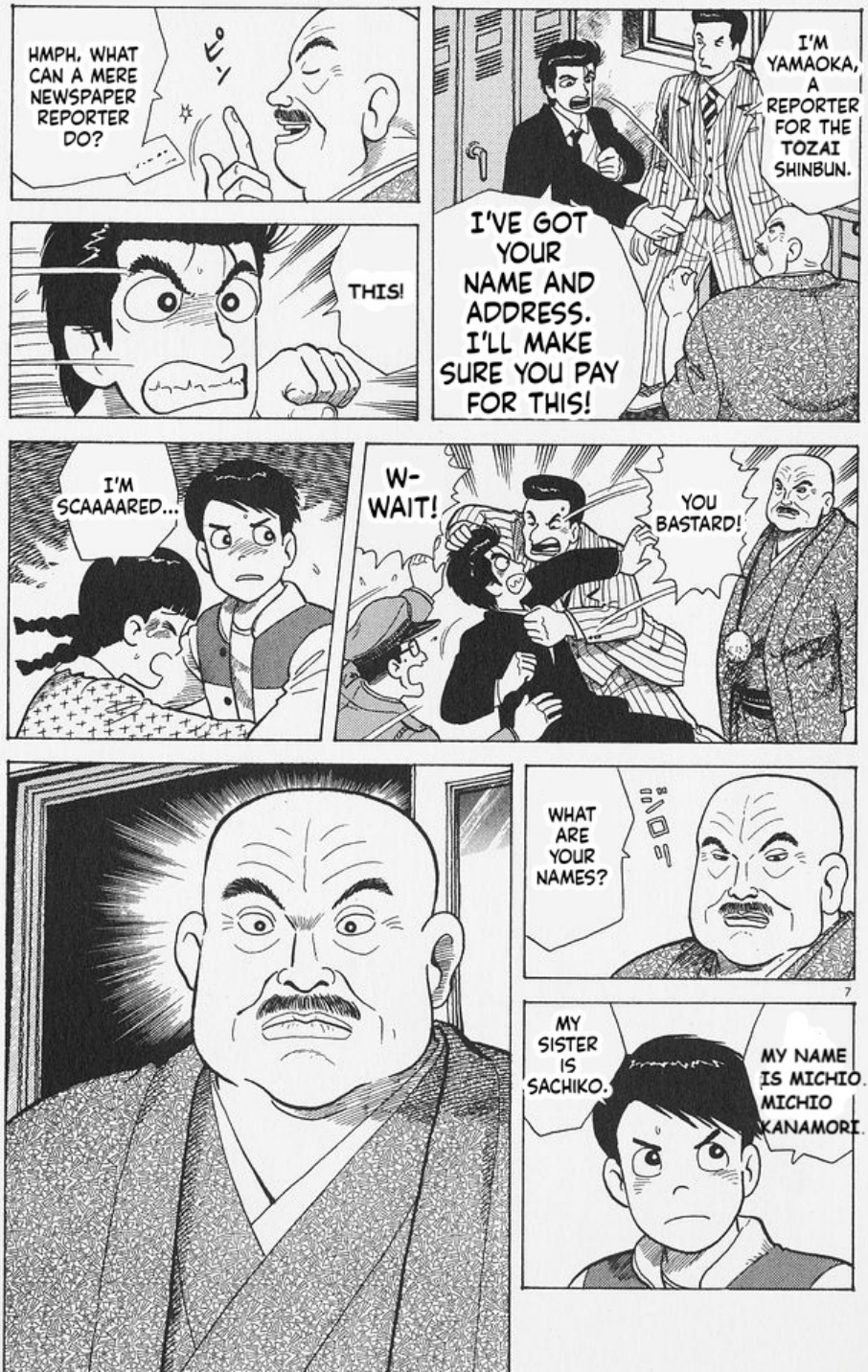

WELL, THIS BAG IS UNDOUBTEDLY MR. KANAMORI'S.
SO IT'S GINZABURO KANAMORI, HUH.
THE NAME OF THE REGISTERED OWNER OF THE CAR YOU CAME IN...
THE NAME ON THE HOSPITAL EXAMINATION TICKET AND CREDIT CARDS IN THE BAG MATCHES...

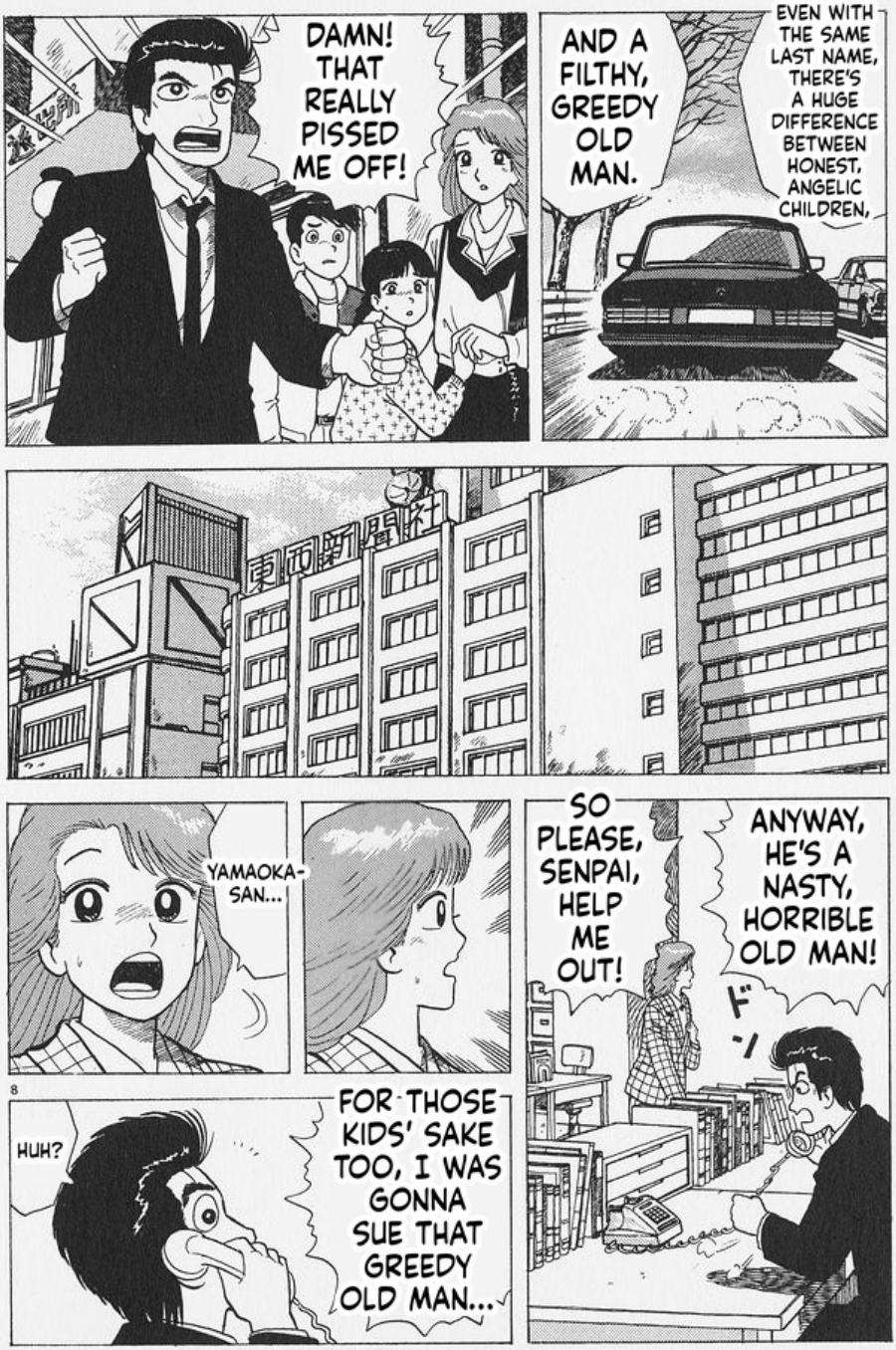
5

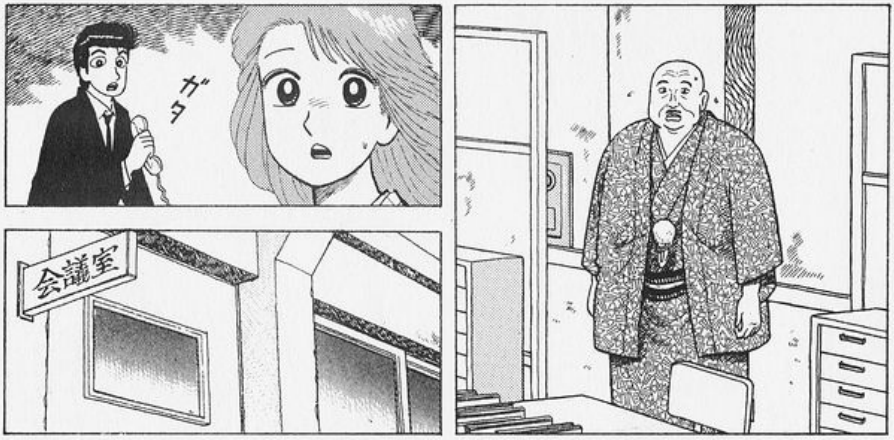
WAIT! IT'S ONLY NATURAL TO THANK THESE KIDS WHO PICKED IT UP FOR YOU.

LET'S GO.
OBVIOUSLY.

WHAT I JUST PICKED UP WAS FIVE MILLION YEN IN CASH AND TEN CHECKS, TOTALING THIRTY MILLION YEN!
HEY, HEY NOW!
Y-YES SIR.
HEY, GIVE THEM A THOUSAND YEN OR SOMETHING.
I IMMEDIATELY WENT BACK TO THE SCENE WHERE I LEFT MY BAG BEHIND, FOUND THESE KIDS HOLDING IT THERE, AND CAME HERE WITH THEM.
DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I COULD EVEN PRESS CHARGES AGAINST THESE KIDS FOR THEFT CAUGHT IN THE ACT.
SIGH...
THESE KIDS HAVE THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE AT LEAST 5% AS A REWARD.
DON'T MESS AROUND.
6
I'M SORRY, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN REALLY DO HERE...
OFFICER, PLEASE DO SOMETHING!
HOW AWFUL!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!


HMPH. WHAT CAN A MERE NEWSPAPER REPORTER DO?
ピン
I'M YAMAOKA, A REPORTER FOR THE TOZAI SHINBUN.
I'VE GOT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS. I'LL MAKE SURE YOU PAY FOR THIS!
THIS!
I'M SCAAAARED...
W-WAIT!
YOU BASTARD!
WHAT ARE YOUR NAMES?
ハロー
7
MY SISTER IS SACHIKO.
MY NAME IS MICHIO. MICHIO KANAMORI.


DAMN! THAT REALLY PISSED ME OFF!
AND A FILTHY, GREEDY OLD MAN.
EVEN WITH THE SAME LAST NAME, THERE'S A HUGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HONEST, ANGELIC CHILDREN,
YAMAOKA-SAN...
8
HUH?
FOR THOSE KIDS' SAKE TOO, I WAS GONNA SUE THAT GREEDY OLD MAN...
SO PLEASE, SENPAI, HELP ME OUT!
ANYWAY, HE'S A NASTY, HORRIBLE OLD MAN!
ドン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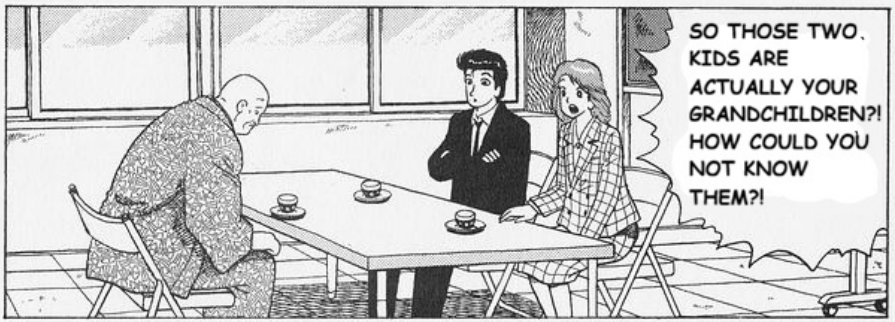
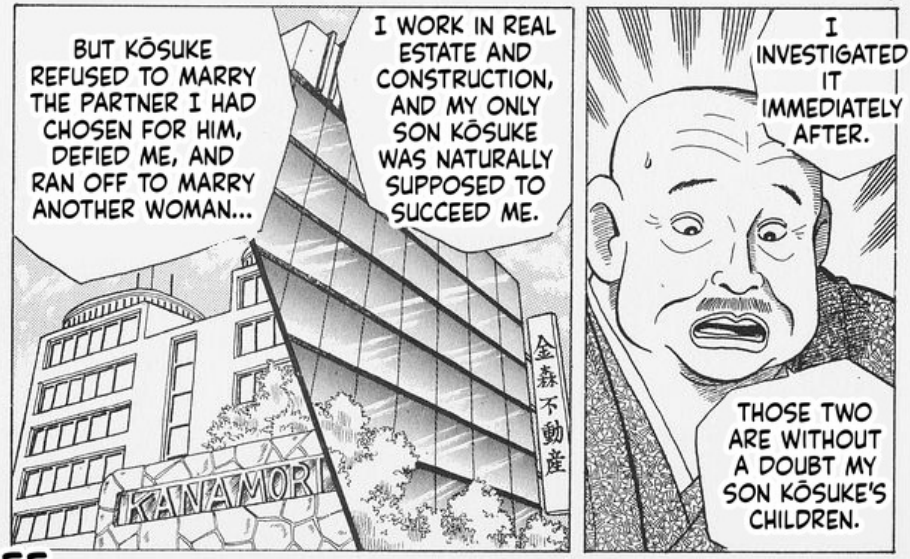
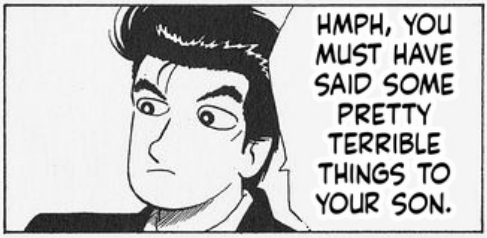
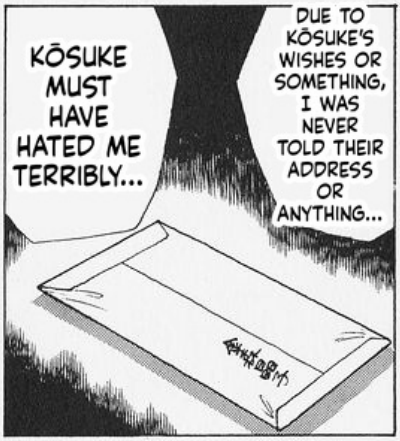

SO THOSE TWO KIDS ARE ACTUALLY YOUR GRANDCHILDREN?! HOW COULD YOU NOT KNOW THEM?!

9


BUT KŌSUKE REFUSED TO MARRY THE PARTNER I HAD CHOSEN FOR HIM, DEFIED ME, AND RAN OFF TO MARRY ANOTHER WOMAN...
I WORK IN REAL ESTATE AND CONSTRUCTION, AND MY ONLY SON KŌSUKE WAS NATURALLY SUPPOSED TO SUCCEED ME.
金森不動産
KANAMORI
I INVESTIGATED IT IMMEDIATELY AFTER.
THOSE TWO ARE WITHOUT A DOUBT MY SON KŌSUKE'S CHILDREN.

BUT THEN THREE YEARS AGO, I RECEIVED WORD FROM HIS WIFE THAT KŌSUKE HAD PASSED AWAY FROM ILLNESS...
AND SO WE LOST TOUCH COMPLETELY, THOUGH I HEARD THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE THAT TWO CHILDREN WERE BORN.

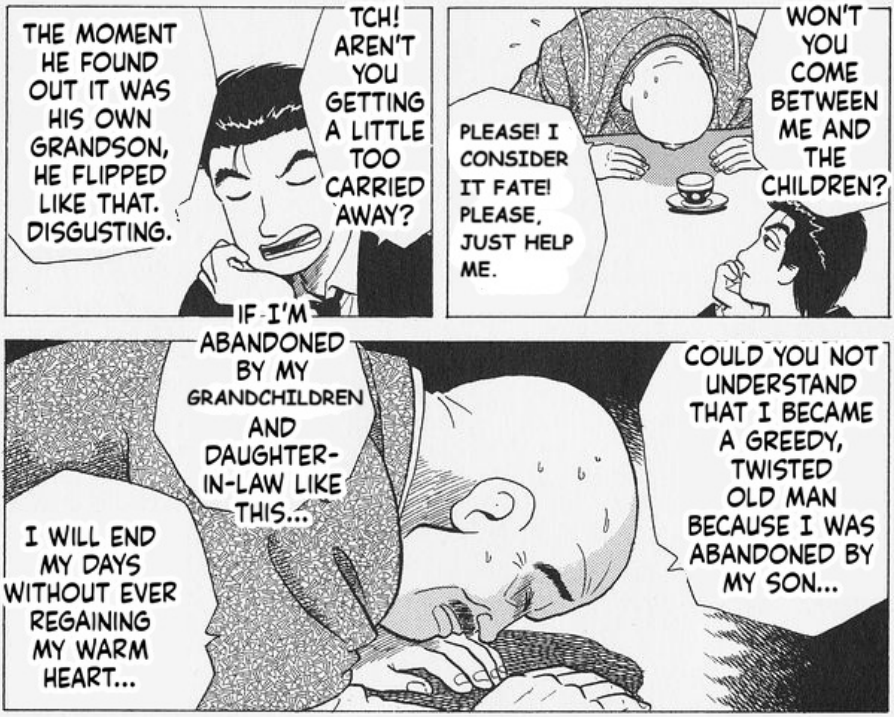

HMPH, YOU MUST HAVE SAID SOME PRETTY TERRIBLE THINGS TO YOUR SON.


KŌSUKE MUST HAVE HATED ME TERRIBLY...
DUE TO KŌSUKE'S WISHES OR SOMETHING, I WAS NEVER TOLD THEIR ADDRESS OR ANYTHING...

10

MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW MAY COME ALONG AS WELL, I DON'T MIND.
I WANT TO LIVE WITH MY GRANDCHILDREN.

BUT STILL, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND THEM...
HOWEVER, AS I'VE GROWN OLDER, I'VE COME TO DESPERATELY WANT TO SEE THE CHILDREN KŌSUKE LEFT BEHIND.
I BELIEVE WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY WAS DIVINE GUIDANCE...


THE MOMENT HE FOUND OUT IT WAS HIS OWN GRANDSON, HE FLIPPED LIKE THAT. DISGUSTING.
TCH! AREN'T YOU GETTING A LITTLE TOO CARRIED AWAY?
PLEASE! I CONSIDER IT FATE! PLEASE, JUST HELP ME.
WON'T YOU COME BETWEEN ME AND THE CHILDREN?
IF I'M ABANDONED BY MY GRANDCHILDREN AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW LIKE THIS...
I WILL END MY DAYS WITHOUT EVER REGAINING MY WARM HEART...
COULD YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THAT I BECAME A GREEDY, TWISTED OLD MAN BECAUSE I WAS ABANDONED BY MY SON...
I BEAR MY FATHER-IN-LAW NO ILL WILL WHATSOEVER...
11

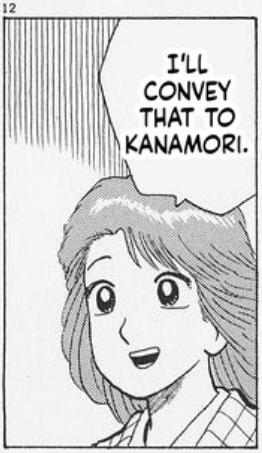
DON'T RELY ON YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW, LIVE BY YOUR OWN STRENGTH...
NOT CONTACTING MY FATHER-IN-LAW WAS MY Llate HUSBAND'S WISH.

I DON'T NEED MONEY OR ANYTHING.

I'LL START WORKING SOON AND MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR YOU, MOM.

I'M JUST AFRAID THAT MICHIO AND SACHIKO WILL LOSE THEMSELVES, BLINDED BY MY FATHER-IN-LAW'S WEALTH.
SO IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T WANT TO GO TO MY FATHER-IN-LAW'S PLACE.

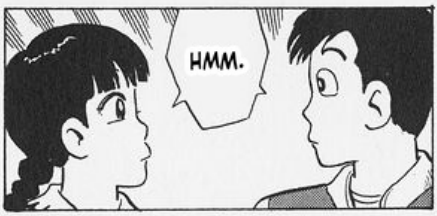
12


I'LL CONVEY THAT TO KANAMORI.

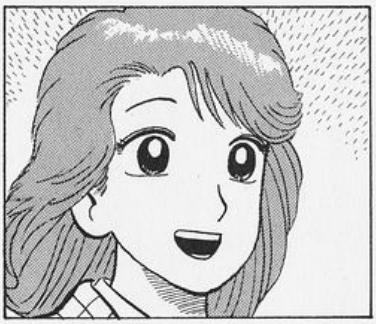
I UNDERSTAND. I THINK THAT'S THE RIGHT WAY TO THINK.

SO I'M SORRY, BUT WE'D LIKE TO STAY AS WE ARE...
I'LL SUPPORT US BOTH SOMEHOW WITH MY WORK.

NEW YEAR'S PREP IS TOUGH, HUH.
IT'S YEAR-END, SO EVERYONE'S SO BUSY.
天文館通り
歳末大売出し
THEN BUY ME SOME CANDY INSTEAD.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, NEW YEAR'S WITHOUT MOCHI?
COOKIES OR CHOCOLATE WOULD BE BETTER.
THAT'S RIGHT, WE HAVE TO ORDER MOCHI.
WE DON'T NEED IT.
WE DON'T NEED MOCHI.
13
HMM... SO YOU'VE NEVER MADE MOCHI BEFORE?
I DON'T LIKE IT.
IT'S NOT EVEN GOOD WHEN IT'S ALL STICKY.
OH, DON'T MICHIO-KUN AND SACHIKO-CHAN LIKE MOCHI?

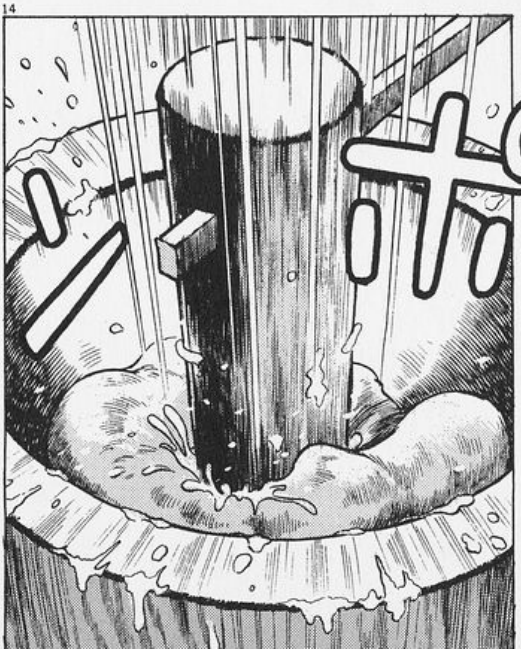

HMM.

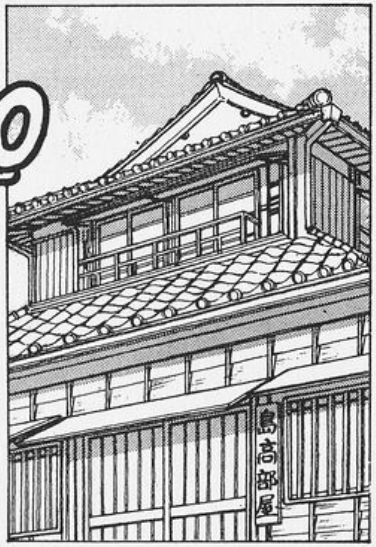
I DON'T KNOW.
OF COURSE NOT.
THAT'S NO GOOD, MOCHI POUNDING IS FUN, YOU KNOW.



I MIGHT BE ABLE TO GIVE THAT OLD MAN A CHANCE TO GET ALONG WITH THE KIDS.

14

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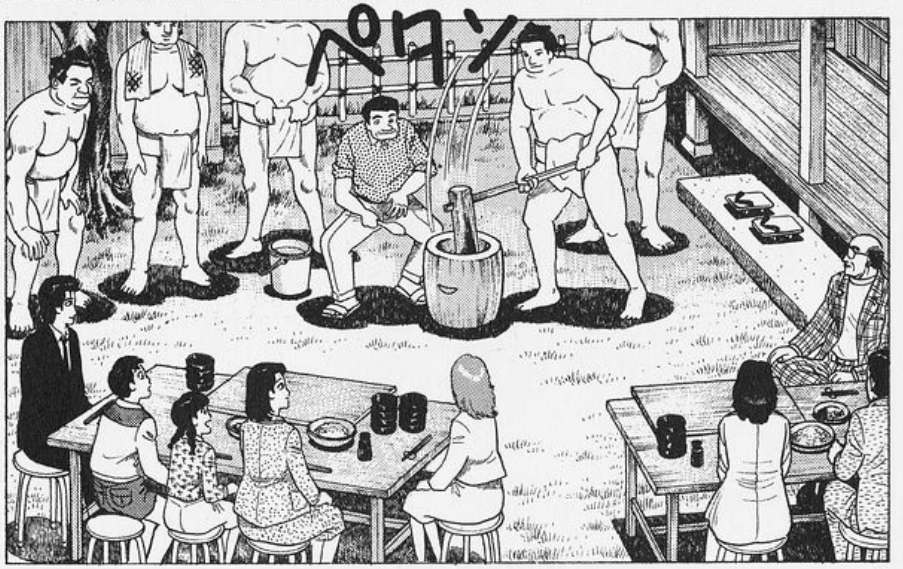
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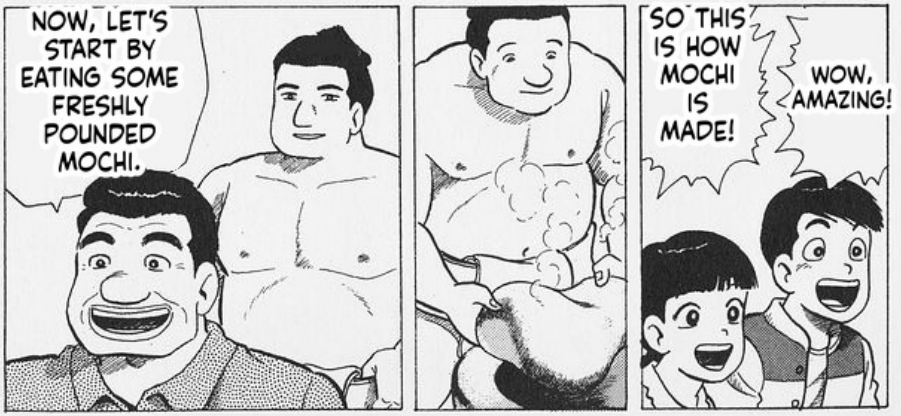
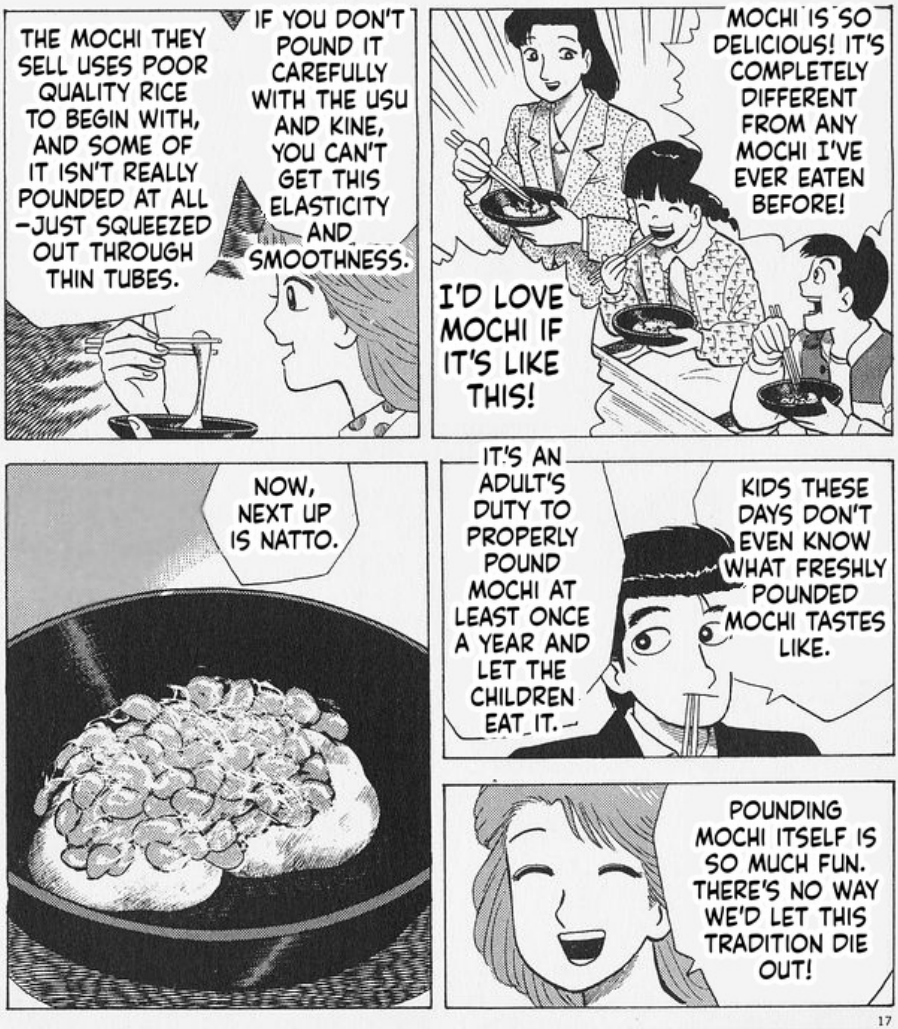
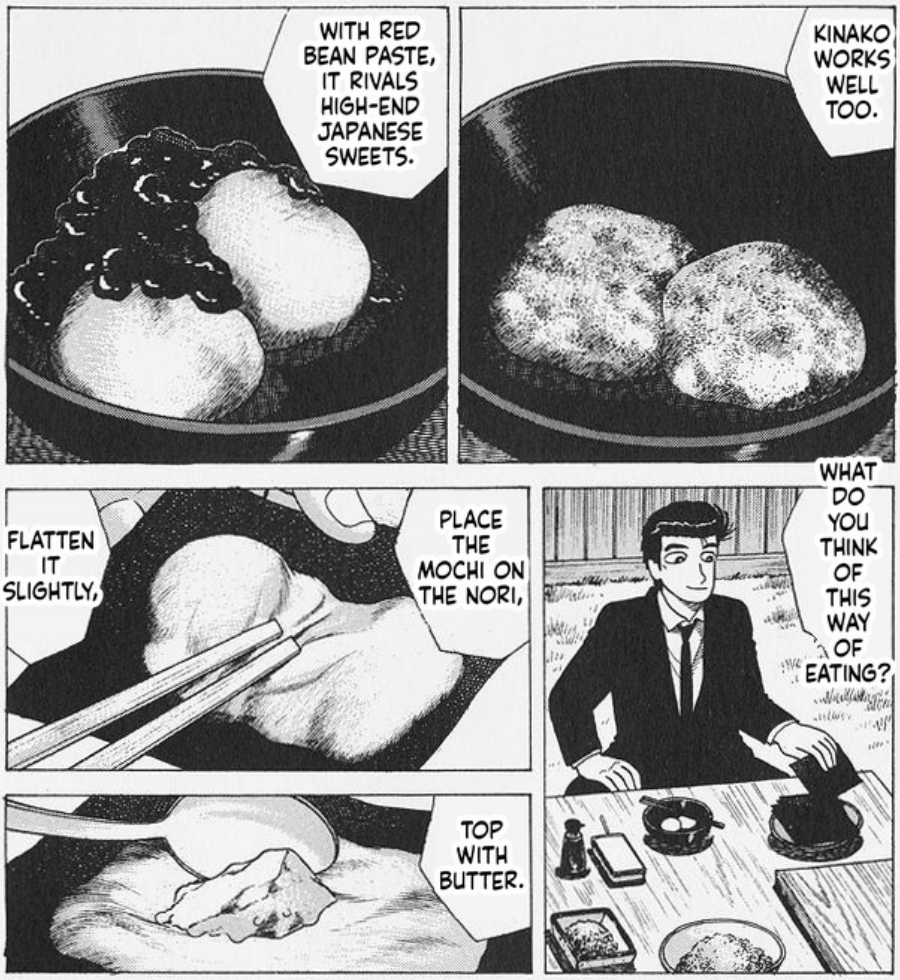
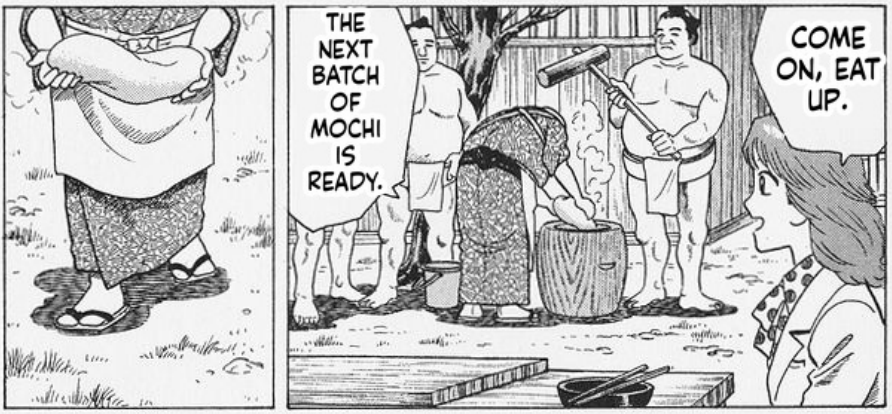

NOW, LET'S START BY EATING SOME FRESHLY POUNDED MOCHI.
SO THIS IS HOW MOCHI IS MADE!
WOW, AMAZING!

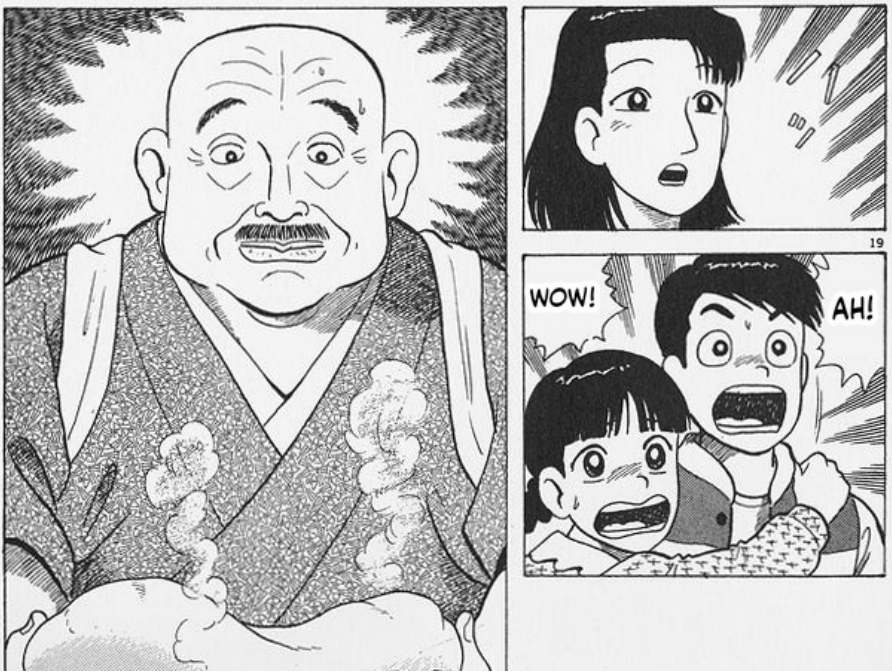
HUH? YOU'RE EATING IT RIGHT AWAY?
I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT BEFORE.
FIRST, COAT IT GENEROUSLY WITH GRATED DAIKON, THEN DRIZZLE SOME SOY SAUCE AND GIVE IT A TRY.
16
AND IT SMELLS AMAZING!
WOW! IT'S SO TENDER!

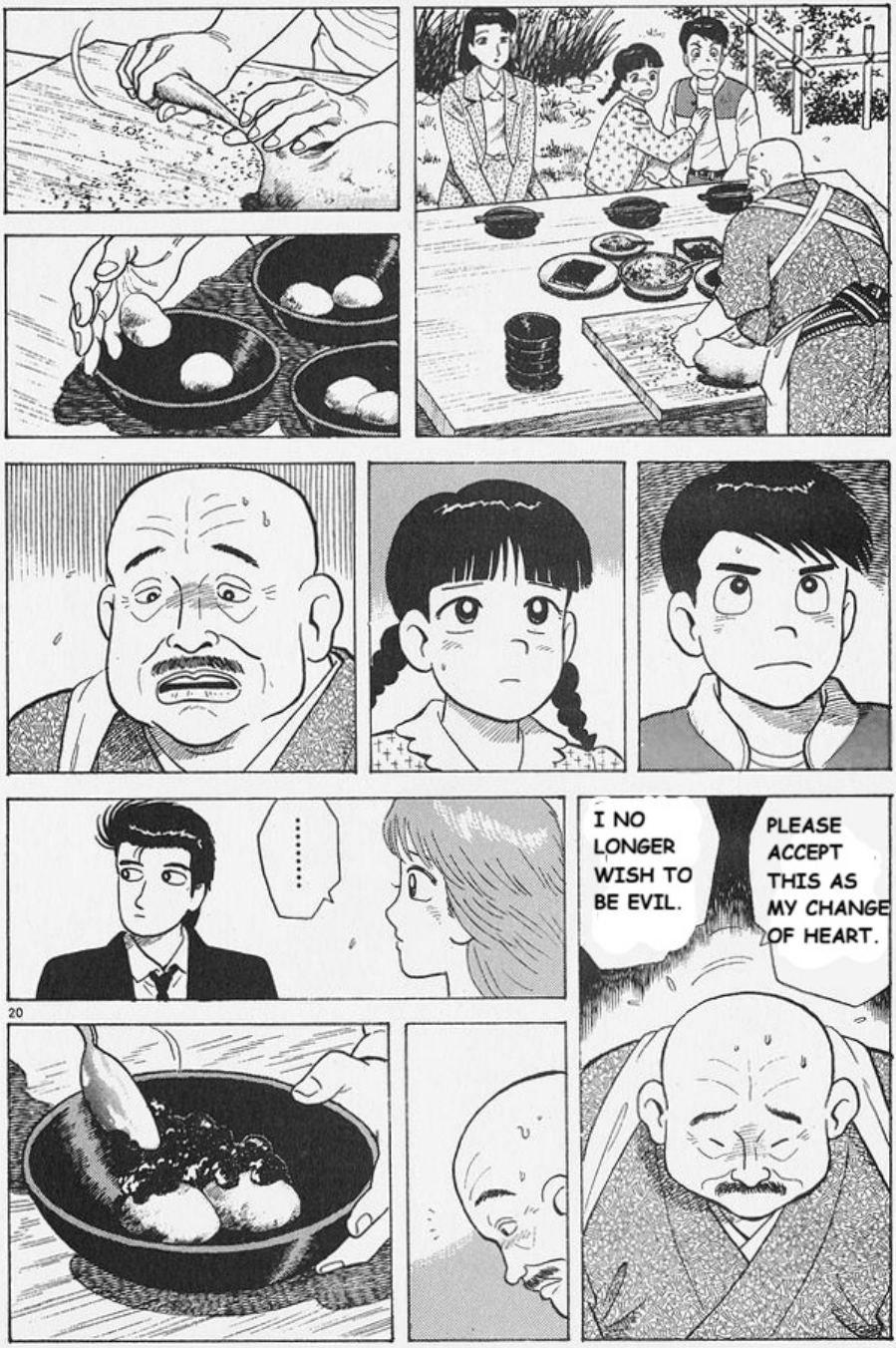

THE MOCHI THEY SELL USES POOR QUALITY RICE TO BEGIN WITH, AND SOME OF IT ISN'T REALLY POUNDED AT ALL —JUST SQUEEZED OUT THROUGH THIN TUBES.
IF YOU DON'T POUND IT CAREFULLY WITH THE USU AND KINE, YOU CAN'T GET THIS ELASTICITY AND SMOOTHNESS.
MOCHI IS SO DELICIOUS! IT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM ANY MOCHI I'VE EVER EATEN BEFORE!
I'D LOVE MOCHI IF IT'S LIKE THIS!
NOW, NEXT UP IS NATTO.
IT'S AN ADULT'S DUTY TO PROPERLY POUND MOCHI AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR AND LET THE CHILDREN EAT IT.
KIDS THESE DAYS DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT FRESHLY POUNDED MOCHI TASTES LIKE.
POUNDING MOCHI ITSELF IS SO MUCH FUN. THERE'S NO WAY WE'D LET THIS TRADITION DIE OUT!
17
I WANT SECONDS OF THIS!
WOW! EVEN THE SAME NATTO TASTES DIFFERENT WHEN YOU EAT IT WITH RICE!


WITH RED BEAN PASTE, IT RIVALS HIGH-END JAPANESE SWEETS.
KINAKO WORKS WELL TOO.
FLATTEN IT SLIGHTLY,
PLACE THE MOCHI ON THE NORI,
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS WAY OF EATING?
TOP WITH BUTTER.
18
OPEN WIDE.
ROLL IT UP,
DRIZZLE WITH SOY SAUCE,

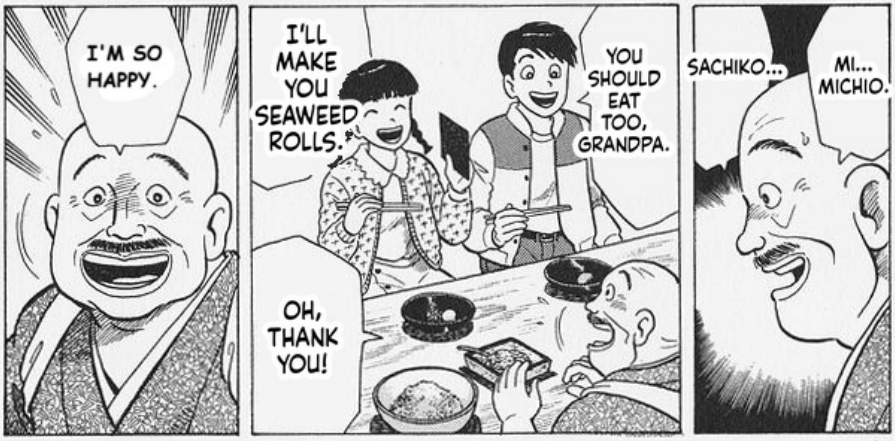
BUTTER AND SOY SAUCE ARE A GREAT COMBO!
WOW! MOCHI AND BUTTER GO TOGETHER!


THE NEXT BATCH OF MOCHI IS READY.
COME ON, EAT UP.

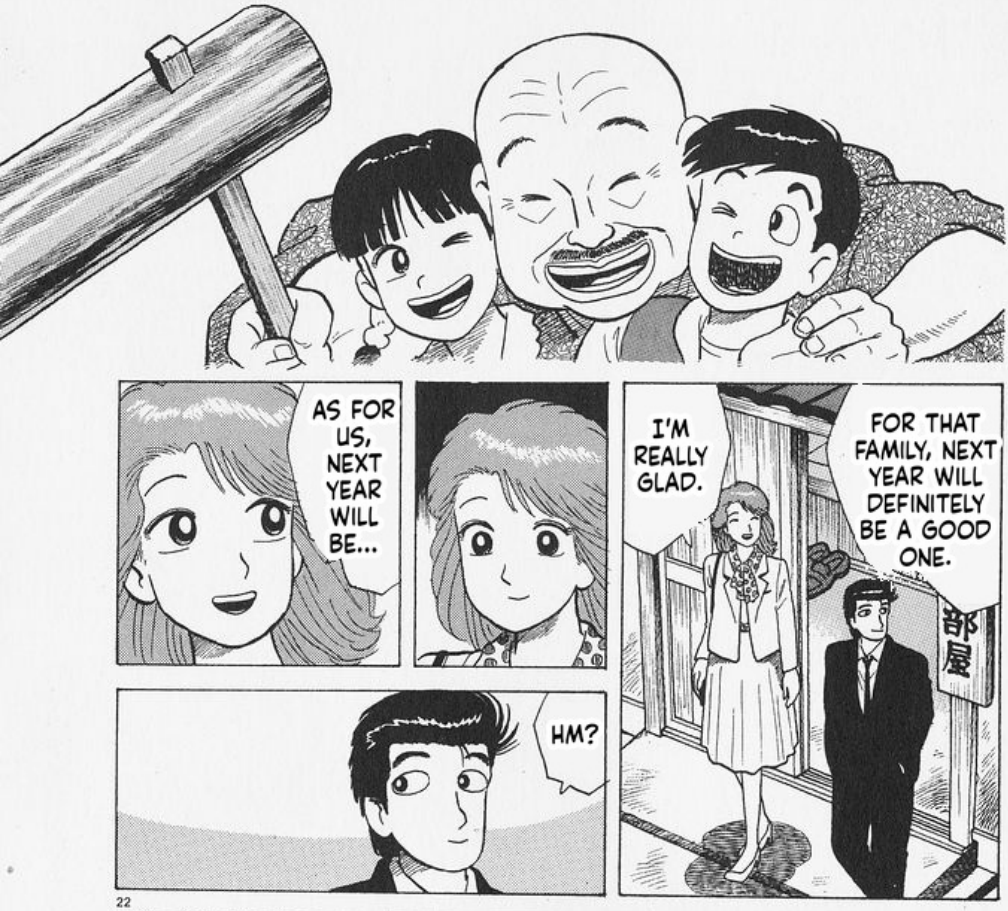

WOW!
AH!


.....
I NO LONGER WISH TO BE EVIL.
PLEASE ACCEPT THIS AS MY CHANGE OF HEART.

I LIKE NATTO.
にこっ
IT'S DELICIOUS.


I'M SO HAPPY.
I'LL MAKE YOU SEAWEED ROLLS.
YOU SHOULD EAT TOO, GRANDPA.
OH, THANK YOU!
SACHIKO...
MI... MICHIO.

キャハハハハ
ぺったんこーっ
ぺったんこーっ

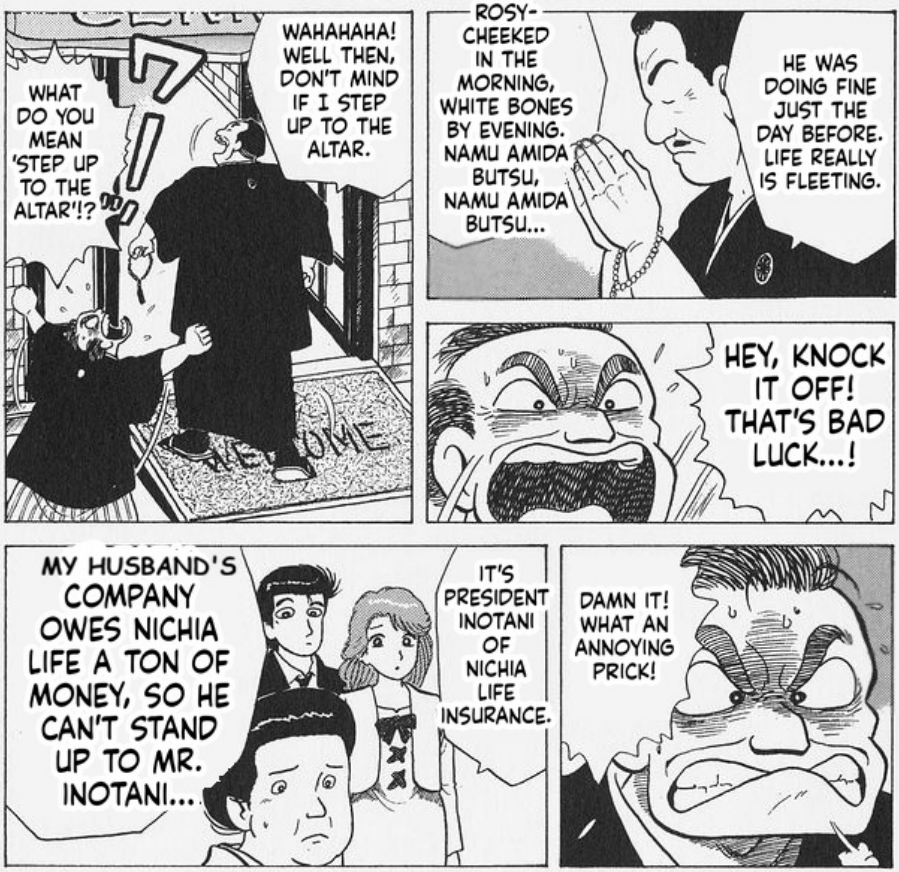

AS FOR US, NEXT YEAR WILL BE...
HM?
I'M REALLY GLAD.
FOR THAT FAMILY, NEXT YEAR WILL DEFINITELY BE A GOOD ONE.
部屋
OF COURSE, THE BEST YEAR YET.

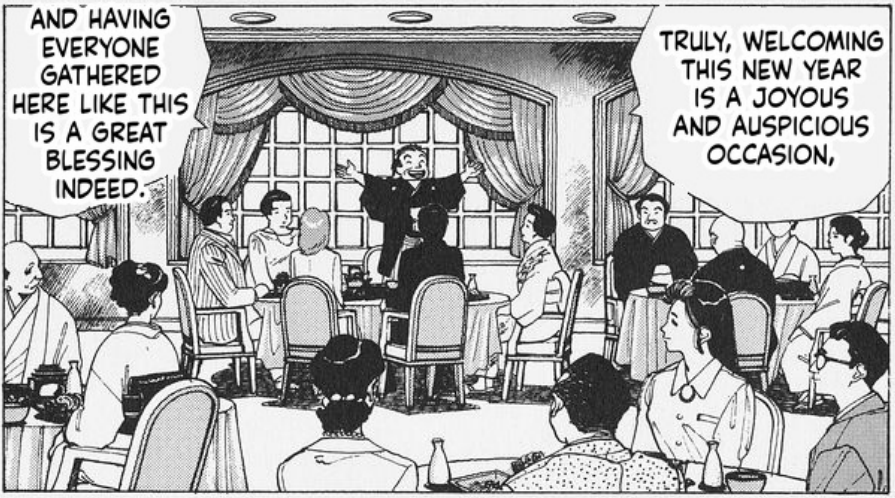
第4話
死出の料理

HEY THERE, MS. KURITA, YAMAOKA, HAPPY NEW YEAR.
JANUARY 2ND
NEW GINZA
NEW G
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU AGAIN THIS YEAR.
HAPPY NEW YEAR.
2
I WAS THINKING YOU MIGHT FINALLY GET MARRIED SOMETIME THIS YEAR.
I'VE BEEN HEARING A LOT OF RUMORS ABOUT YOU TWO.
HUH?
HUH?
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE MET MY WIFE, ISN'T IT?
OH MY, THANK YOU FOR ALWAYS LOOKING AFTER MY HUSBAND.

HEY, HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!
EVEN MY OLD MAN ONLY BECAME A DECENT HUSBAND AFTER I WHIPPED HIM INTO SHAPE.
HAA.
LISTEN HERE, YOU CAN'T GO AROUND SPOILING MEN.
MY, MR. ZHOU FROM YOKOHAMA. I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU FROM MY HUSBAND, BUT OH
MY, A MAN REALLY DOES LOOK BETTER WHEN HE'S GOT THE FACE TO MATCH.
WELL, THANK YOU...
THANK YOU FOR HAVING US TODAY.
HAPPY NEW YEAR.
AH, MR. ZHOU AND MADAM, WELCOME TO SUCH A HUMBLE PLACE.
3
DON'T BE STUPID, DAD. DON'T START GETTING JEALOUS SO EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR.
HEY NOW, MOTHER, DON'T YOU GO FLIRTING.
GOOD GRIEF, THESE TWO ARE HOPELESS.
はははは

ギク
HI THERE.
OH, GOD, NOT THIS JERK.
YOU'D BETTER START PREPARING YOURSELF MENTALLY FOR WHEN MR. ITAYAMA KICKS THE BUCKET.
YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN A PERSON MIGHT JUST DROP DEAD.
WIDOW? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? MY HUSBAND IS STILL ALIVE.
OH, LOOKS LIKE THE WIDOW ITAYAMA IS DOING JUST FINE.
4
DID YOU FORGET, ITAYAMA? TODAY IS THE ANNIVERSARY OF MR. NOBORIDA'S DEATH. I STOPPED BY HIS GRAVE BEFORE COMING HERE.
FIRST OF ALL, WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK? CARRYING PRAYER BEADS AND ALL...
DON'T SAY SUCH OMINOUS THINGS RIGHT AT THE START OF THE NEW YEAR.


WAHAHAHA! WELL THEN, DON'T MIND IF I STEP UP TO THE ALTAR.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'STEP UP TO THE ALTAR'!?
ROSY-CHEEKED IN THE MORNING, WHITE BONES BY EVENING. NAMU AMIDA BUTSU, NAMU AMIDA BUTSU...
HE WAS DOING FINE JUST THE DAY BEFORE. LIFE REALLY IS FLEETING.
HEY, KNOCK IT OFF! THAT'S BAD LUCK...!
MY HUSBAND'S COMPANY OWES NICHIA LIFE A TON OF MONEY, SO HE CAN'T STAND UP TO MR. INOTANI...
IT'S PRESIDENT INOTANI OF NICHIA LIFE INSURANCE.
DAMN IT! WHAT AN ANNOYING PRICK!


AND HAVING EVERYONE GATHERED HERE LIKE THIS IS A GREAT BLESSING INDEED.
TRULY, WELCOMING THIS NEW YEAR IS A JOYOUS AND AUSPICIOUS OCCASION,

THEY SAY THE GATE PINES ARE BUT MILESTONES ON THE JOURNEY TO THE UNDERWORLD...
WELCOMING A NEW YEAR JUST MEANS YOU'RE THAT MUCH CLOSER TO THE DAY YOU DIE.

NEW YEAR'S IS JUST GRAND, ISN'T IT?
TRULY AUSPICIOUS, TRULY A BLESSING.

WHAT'S SO DAMN 'AUSPICIOUS' ABOUT NEW YEAR'S ANYWAY?

6

THE NEW YEAR'S FOOD IS TRULY A BLESSING, ISN'T IT?
AND WHAT'S SO WONDERFUL ABOUT A JAPANESE NEW YEAR IS,

AHEM, WELL NOW...

IF YOU ROLL IT INTO A KELP ROLL, IT MEANS YOUR HAPPINESS IS DOUBLED OR EVEN TRIPLED.
AND LOOK, KELP IS FOR 'HAPPINESS'.
IT MEANS MANY CHILDREN WILL BE BORN AND YOUR WEALTH WILL INCREASE...
AND THESE HERRING ROE ARE...
THE HIGHLIGHT IS THE SEA BREAM, FOR 'CELEBRATION'.
GOMAME IS SO YOU STAY HEALTHY AND ROBUST.
BLACK BEANS ARE SO YOUR HARD WORK BEARS FRUIT.
7
HUH?
HMM, I WONDER ABOUT THAT.
OSECHI CUISINE TRULY IS SO AUSPICIOUS AND WONDERFUL, ISN'T IT?

IT MIGHT JUST BE A 'LUMP ABOVE THE EYE'— A REAL NUISANCE.
EVEN KELP ISN'T ALWAYS 'JOYOUS.'
WHICH MEANS YOUR FORTUNE WILL JUST WASH AWAY WITHOUT EVER GROWING.
AND HERRING ROE? IF YOU EAT THEM AS EGGS, THEY'LL NEVER BECOME FISH. FAR FROM HAVING MANY CHILDREN, IT'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE.
BUT IT'S NOT SPECIAL WHEN IT'S DEAD.
A SEA BREAM MIGHT BE 'CONGRATULATORY' IF IT'S ALIVE,
IT MEANS BEING FILLED WITH REGRET WHILE UNABLE TO DO A THING.
BUT WHEN IT COMES TO DRIED SARDINES, IT'S JUST 'GRINDING YOUR TEETH' IN FRUSTRATION.
I HATE BLACK BEANS TOO; THEY'RE LIKE 'BLACK MARKS' IN SUMO. IT MEANS A LOSING STREAK.
8
YEAR AFTER YEAR THE FLOWERS ARE THE SAME, BUT YEAR AFTER YEAR THE PEOPLE ARE NOT.
LIFE IS IMPERMANENT, THE FUTURE IS PITCH BLACK, AND THOSE WHO PROSPER MUST SURELY FALL!
WAHAHAHA! NEW YEAR'S IS A BLAST, ISN'T IT!
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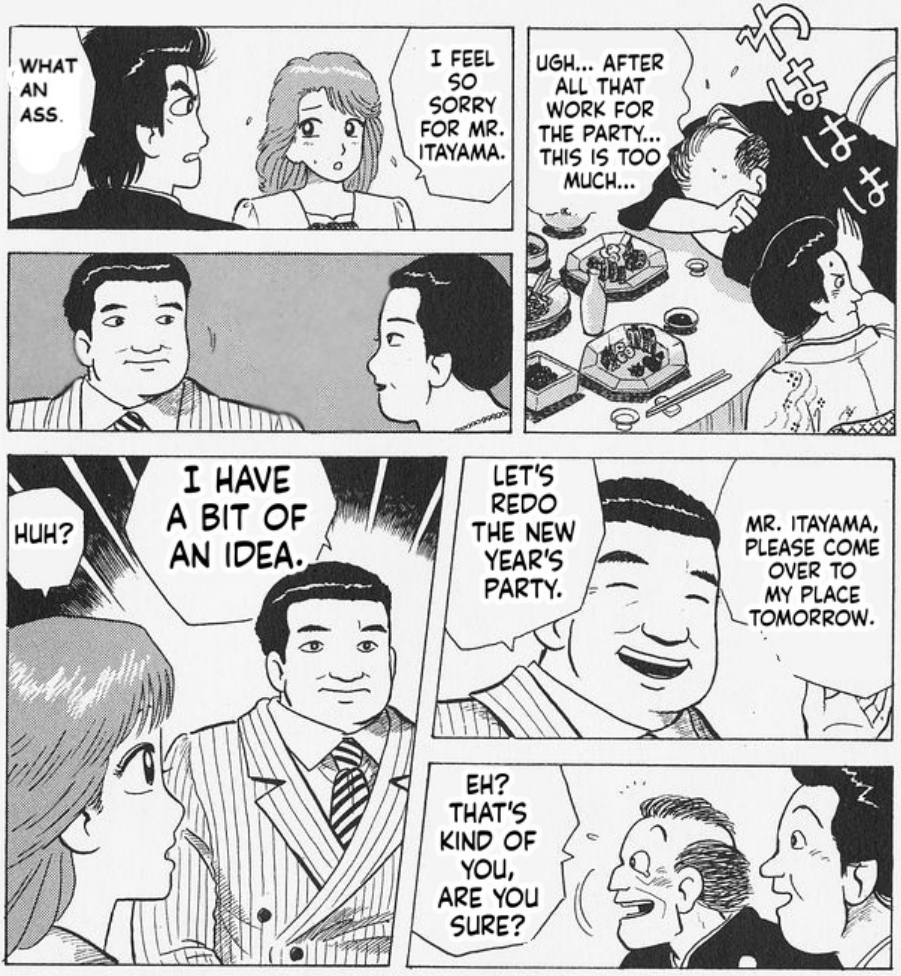
WHAT AN ASS.
I FEEL SO SORRY FOR MR. ITAYAMA.
UGH... AFTER ALL THAT WORK FOR THE PARTY... THIS IS TOO MUCH...
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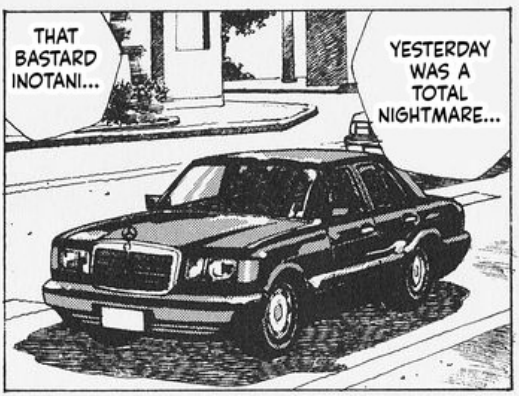
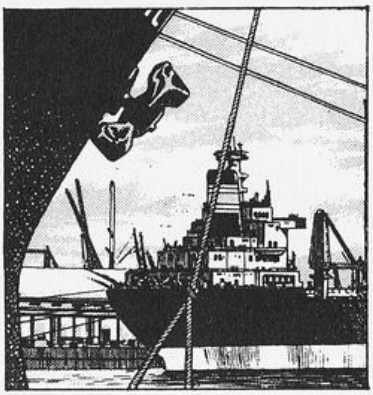
HUH?
I HAVE A BIT OF AN IDEA.
LET'S REDO THE NEW YEAR'S PARTY.
MR. ITAYAMA, PLEASE COME OVER TO MY PLACE TOMORROW.
EH? THAT'S KIND OF YOU, ARE YOU SURE?
9
MASTER ZHOU IS REALLY MOTIVATED...
I SEE...


THAT BASTARD INOTANI...
YESTERDAY WAS A TOTAL NIGHTMARE...



I BET IT'S GOING TO BE A MASSIVE FEAST!
YEAH, I CAN'T WAIT.

JUST FORGET ABOUT IT, DEAR. MASTER ZHOU IS GOING TO HELP US TURN OUR LUCK AROUND.

10

I GIVE UP!

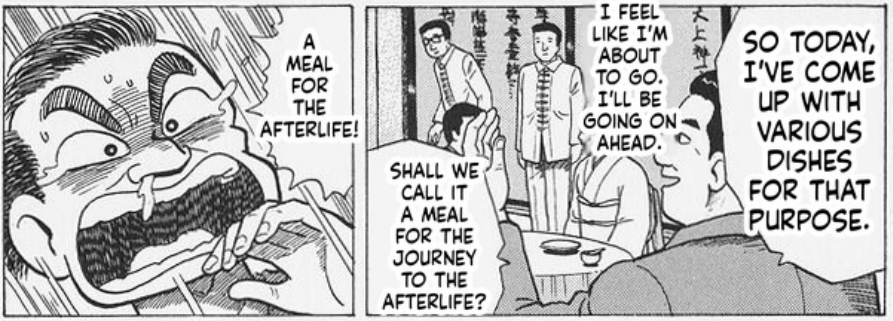
I SKIPPED BREAKFAST FOR THIS, YOU KNOW.

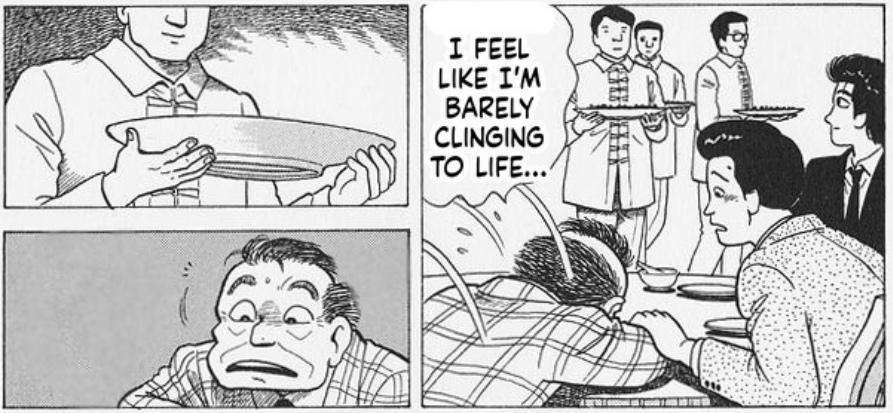
I-ALREADY WOLFED DOWN A BOWL OF RICE BEFORE COMING!
I CAN EAT WAY MORE WHEN I'M IN A GOOD MOOD!

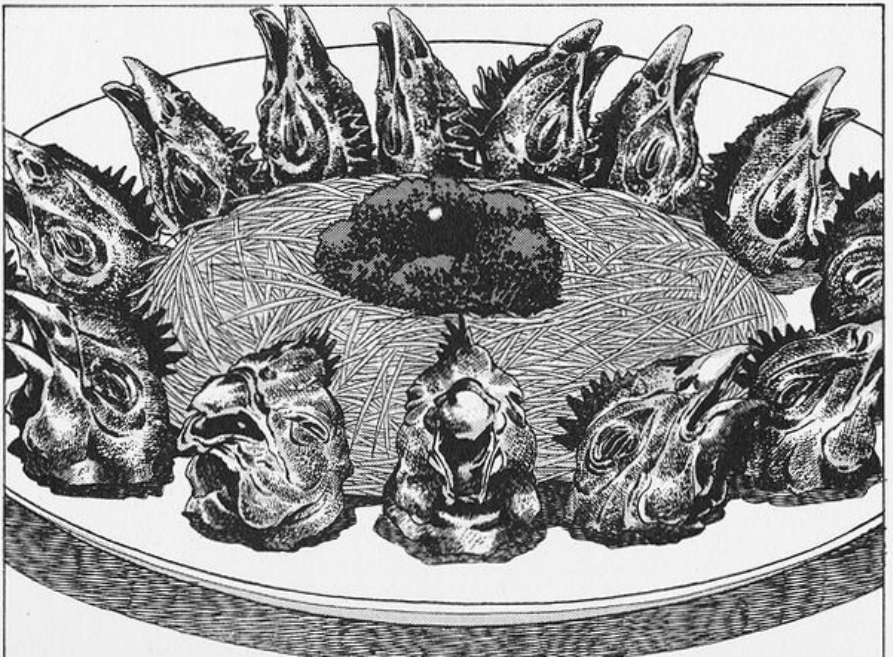
79 *TL NOTE: I'M NOT SURE WHAT THAT IS MEANT TO BE IN THE LARGE PANEL. I CANNOT ERASE IT WITHOUT COMPLETELY SCREWING UP THE ART IN THE PANEL. IF ANYONE GETS WHAT THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE, LET ME KNOW...

WE CHINESE USUALLY CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR ACCORDING TO THE LUNAR CALENDAR.
RIGHT NOW, JAPAN IS IN THE MIDDLE OF NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATIONS,
SUPREME DIVINE POWER, PURE LOYALTY, GREAT JUSTICE, VIRTUE, REVERING THE RIGHTEOUS, HEAVEN, EARTH, AND MAN...
WOULD YOU LEAVE THIS TO ME?
EH...
IT IS ACTUALLY THANKS TO PRESIDENT INOTANI OF NICHIA LIFE, WHO IS HERE WITH US.
NOW, AS FOR WHY I DECIDED TO HOLD A NEW YEAR'S PARTY TODAY, AT THE SAME TIME AS THE JAPANESE,
12
HE SAID THAT THE NEW YEAR IS NOTHING TO CELEBRATE...
THE REASON IS, I HEARD A WONDERFUL STORY FROM PRESIDENT INOTANI YESTERDAY.
EH? ME?
HUH? WHY HIM?

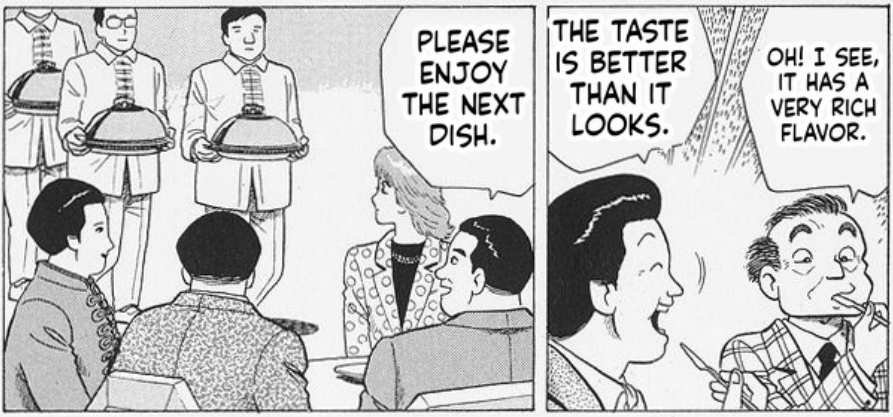
INDEED. THOSE WHO LACK LOGIC ARE EXCHANGING FOOLISH GREETINGS LIKE 'HAPPY NEW YEAR' AND MAKING MERRY.
EVERY TIME A HUMAN WELCOMES A NEW YEAR, THEY TAKE ONE STEP CLOSER TO DEATH. THERE IS NOTHING 'HAPPY' ABOUT THAT.
THE NEW-YEAR'S PINE IS A MILESTONE ON THE JOURNEY TO THE UNDERWORLD. EXACTLY RIGHT.
AND YET, HUMANS LIVE UNDER THE DELUSION THAT THEY ALONE WILL NEVER DIE, WASTING THEIR TIME FOOLISHLY DAY AFTER DAY.
FOR PEOPLE LIKE US, IT IS DEEPLY MEANINGFUL TO VIEW THE NEW YEAR'S PINE AS A MILESTONE ON THE JOURNEY TO THE UNDERWORLD.
THIS IS JUST A REPEAT OF YESTERDAY.
—W-WAIT... WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...? I CAME HERE THINKING I COULD TURN MY LUCK AROUND TODAY...
13
ニヤニヤ
TRULY, THE NEW YEAR IS NO TIME TO BE FROLICKING IN HIGH SPIRITS.
AT THE START OF THE YEAR, ONE SHOULD RESOLVE TO LIVE LIFE WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT, SO THEY MAY DIE WITHOUT REGRETS AT ANY MOMENT.
THIS IS A TIME TO REFLECT ON DEATH AND PREPARE FOR THE END.
THERE'S NOTHING HAPPY ABOUT THIS AT ALL...
BOO HOO HOO... THIS TURNED INTO A TERRIBLE NEW YEAR'S...

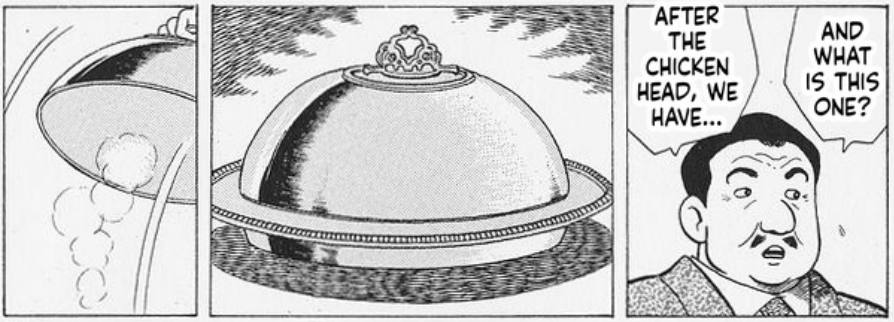

A MEAL FOR THE AFTERLIFE!
SHALL WE CALL IT A MEAL FOR THE JOURNEY TO THE AFTERLIFE?
I FEEL LIKE I'M ABOUT TO GO. I'LL BE GOING ON AHEAD.
SO TODAY, I'VE COME UP WITH VARIOUS DISHES FOR THAT PURPOSE.

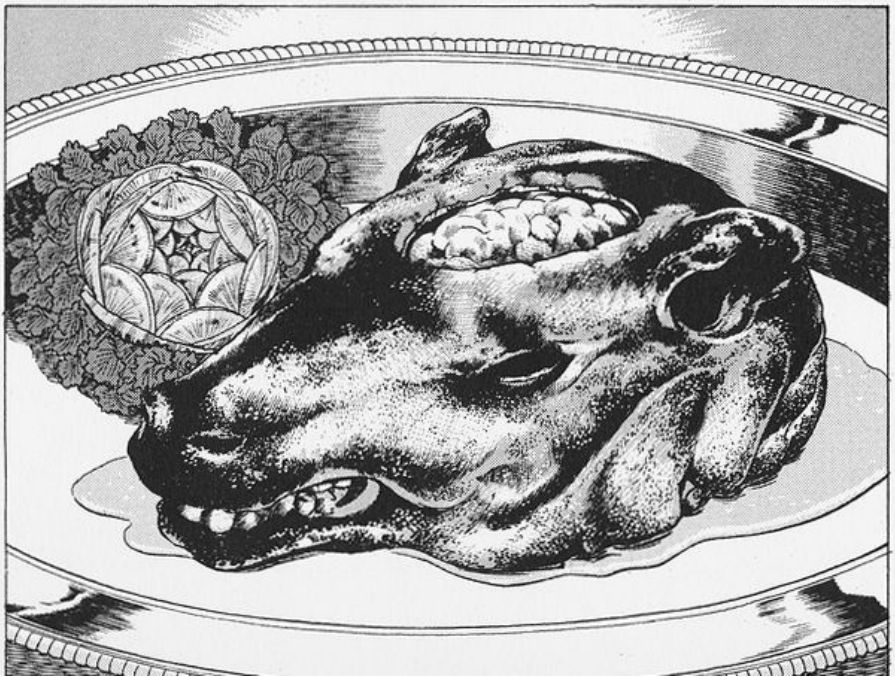

I FEEL LIKE I'M BARELY CLINGING TO LIFE...



TH-THIS CERTAINLY MAKES YOU THINK ABOUT DEATH.
A WHOLE ROW OF CHICKEN HEADS!
ひえーっ
WHOA! THE SKIN IS SO CRISPY AND DELICIOUS!
USE YOUR TEETH TO SCRAPE THE SKIN OFF AS YOU EAT.
THE SKIN HAS BEEN FRIED TO BE FRAGRANT AND CRUNCHY.
15
WHA! BRAINS?!
THE TASTE IS SIMILAR TO FISH MILT.
OH, IT'S SO CREAMY...
SCOOP OUT THE BRAINS INSIDE AND EAT THEM.
THE BONE AT THE TOP OF THE HEAD IS SOFT, SO MAKE A HOLE LIKE THIS,


PLEASE ENJOY THE NEXT DISH.
THE TASTE IS BETTER THAN IT LOOKS.
OH! I SEE, IT HAS A VERY RICH FLAVOR.


AFTER THE CHICKEN HEAD, WE HAVE...
AND WHAT IS THIS ONE?



IT'S A WHOLE LAMB'S HEAD ROASTED IN THE OVEN.
WHAT IS THIS?!
UU-WAH!
ガラ
SO WE REALLY ARE EATING THE BRAIN...
THE BRAIN IS COOKED TO PERFECTION.
AFTER ROASTING, A HOLE IS MADE IN THE SKULL.
IF IT'S TOO RAW, IT WON'T GET CREAMY, BUT IF YOU OVERCOOK IT, IT GETS TOUGH.
17
.....
OH MY! WHAT AN UNEXPECTEDLY ELEGANT TASTE!
I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK ABOUT DEATH...
THE SKULL TRULY DOES LEAVE A SPECIAL IMPRESSION ON THOSE WHO SEE IT...
OH! THE FLAVOR IS RICHER THAN CHICKEN BRAIN, AND MUCH MORE DELICIOUS!

IT MAKES ME INSTINCTIVELY WORRY WHETHER MY OWN BRAIN IS SAFE.
DOESN'T IT MAKE YOU WANT TO HAVE A TASTE OF YOUR OWN BRAIN?
THE CORE OF LIFE, THE VERY ESSENCE OF WHAT MAKES LIFE ALIVE—THAT IS THE BRAIN, AFTER ALL.
EXACTLY, AND WHAT'S MORE, WHAT THEY'RE EATING IS A BRAIN.

わは
IF YOUR PERSONALITY IS ROTTEN, I BET YOUR BRAIN TASTES JUST AS BAD.

THEN, PLEASE ENJOY THE NEXT COURSE.

19

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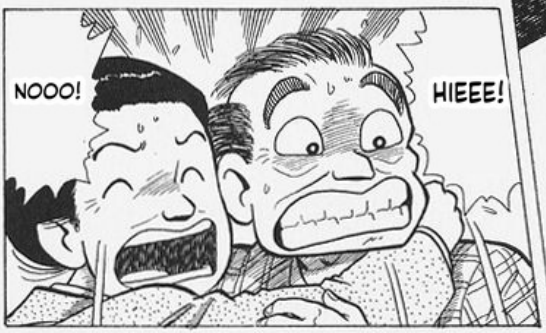
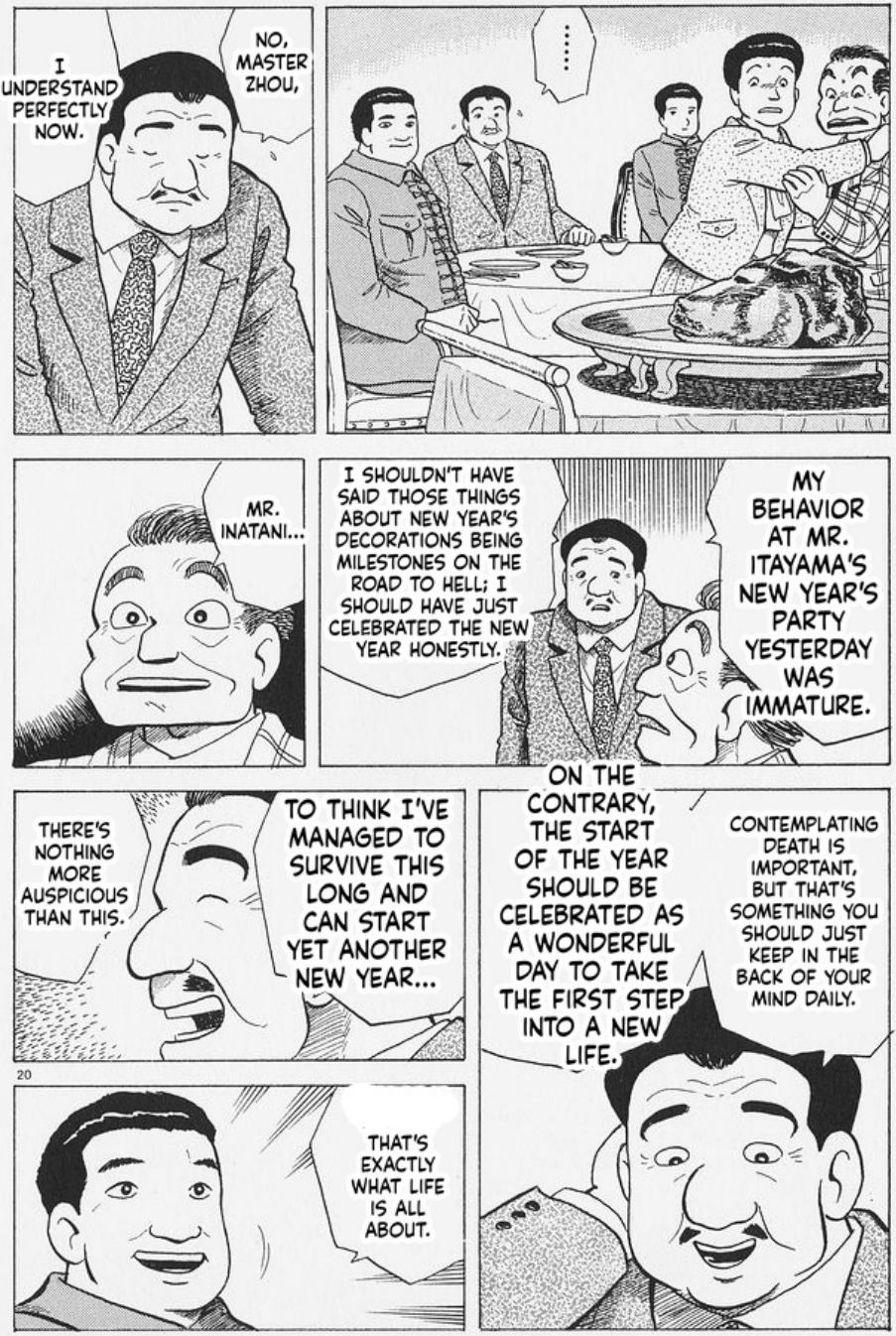
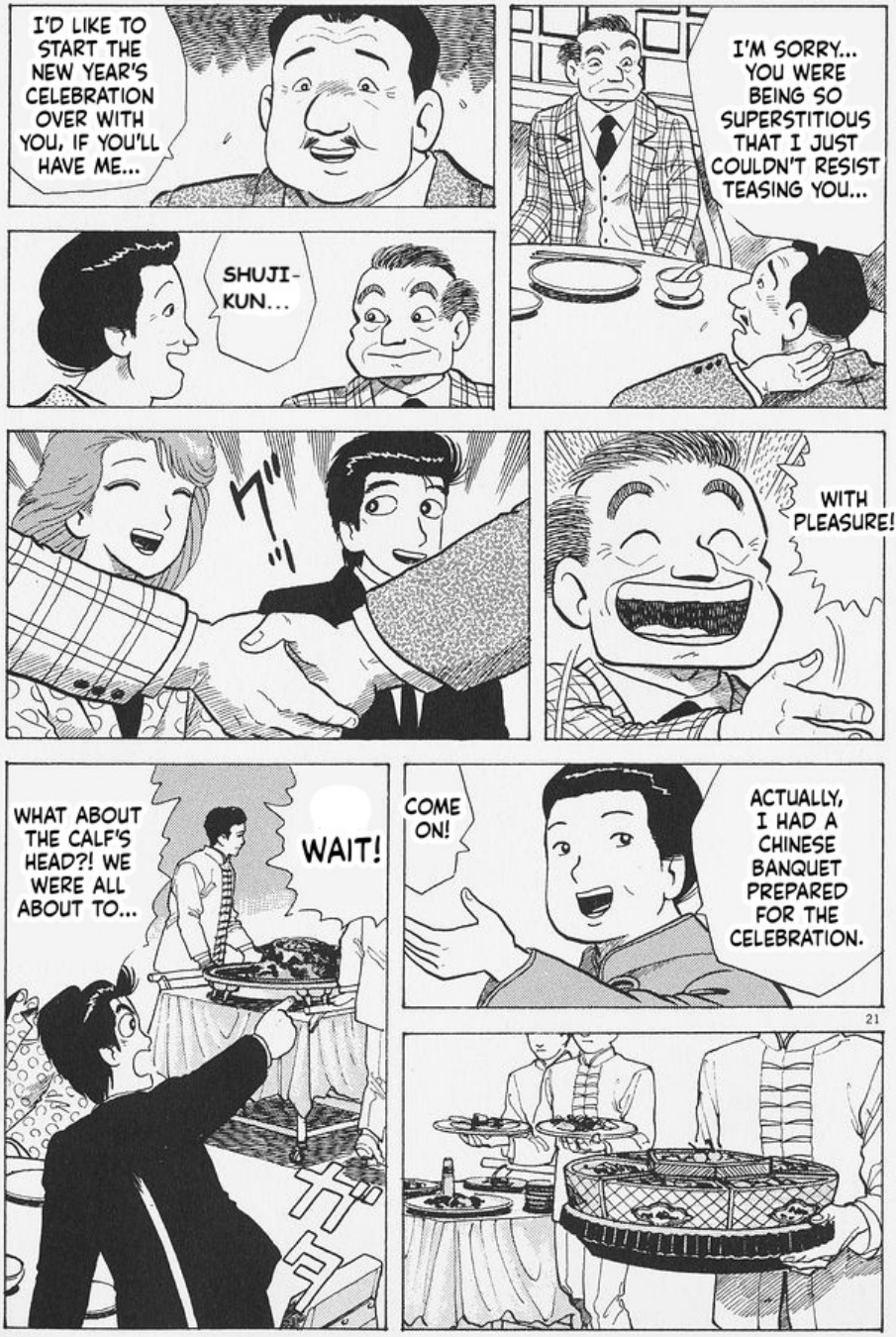
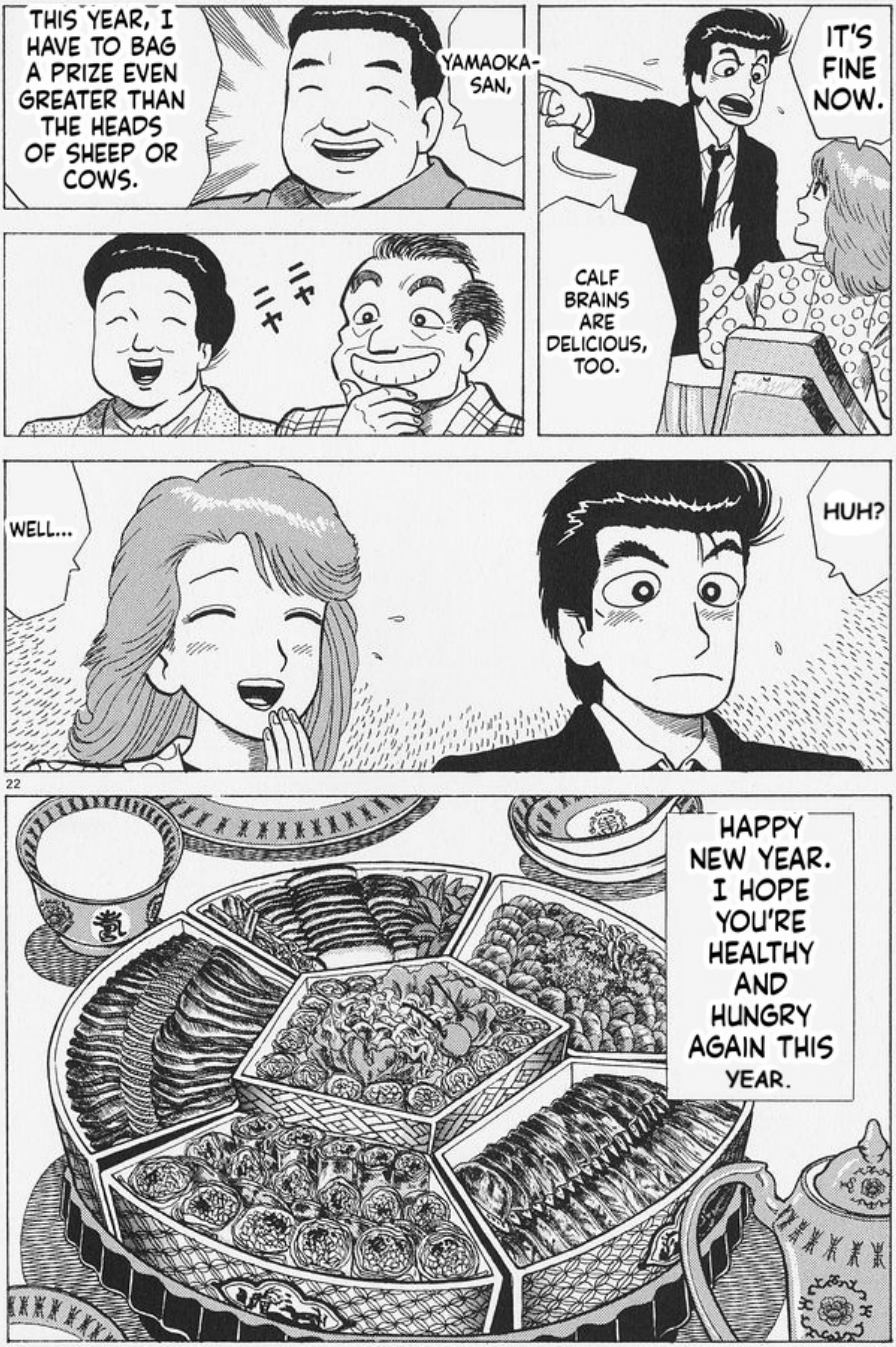
KYAA!


NOOO!
HIEEE!

BURIED IN CHARCOAL AND ROASTED UNTIL GOLDEN BROWN.
IT'S A WHOLE ROASTED CALF'S HEAD.

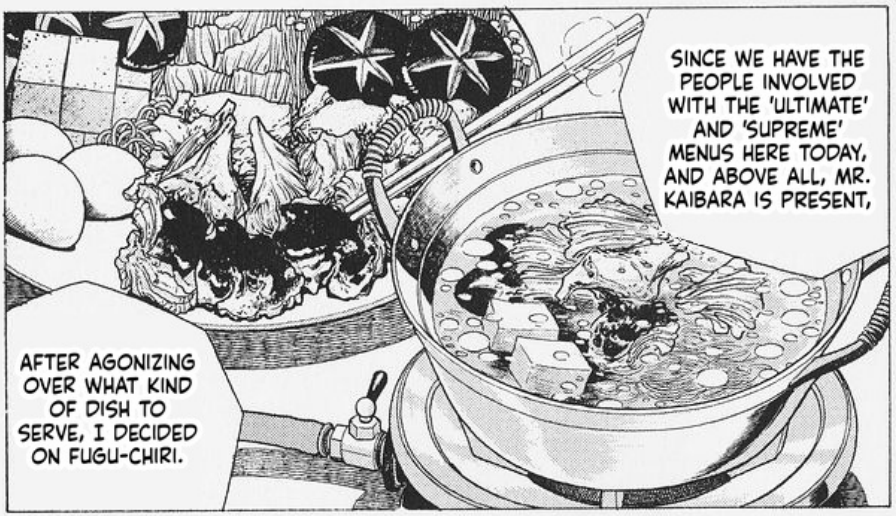

I UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY NOW.
NO, MASTER ZHOU,
.....
MR. INATANI...
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THOSE THINGS ABOUT NEW YEAR'S DECORATIONS BEING MILESTONES ON THE ROAD TO HELL; I SHOULD HAVE JUST CELEBRATED THE NEW YEAR HONESTLY.
MY BEHAVIOR AT MR. ITAYAMA'S NEW YEAR'S PARTY YESTERDAY WAS IMMATURE.
THERE'S NOTHING MORE AUSPICIOUS THAN THIS.
TO THINK I'VE MANAGED TO SURVIVE THIS LONG AND CAN START YET ANOTHER NEW YEAR...
ON THE CONTRARY, THE START OF THE YEAR SHOULD BE CELEBRATED AS A WONDERFUL DAY TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP INTO A NEW LIFE.
CONTEMPLATING DEATH IS IMPORTANT, BUT THAT'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD JUST KEEP IN THE BACK OF YOUR MIND DAILY.
20
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.


I'D LIKE TO START THE NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION OVER WITH YOU, IF YOU'LL HAVE ME...
I'M SORRY... YOU WERE BEING SO SUPERSTITIOUS THAT I JUST COULDN'T RESIST TEASING YOU...
SHUJI-KUN...
グッ
WITH PLEASURE!
WHAT ABOUT THE CALF'S HEAD?! WE WERE ALL ABOUT TO...
WAIT!
ガラ
COME ON!
ACTUALLY, I HAD A CHINESE BANQUET PREPARED FOR THE CELEBRATION.
21


THIS YEAR, I HAVE TO BAG A PRIZE EVEN GREATER THAN THE HEADS OF SHEEP OR COWS.
YAMAOKA-SAN,
ニヤ ニヤ
IT'S FINE NOW.
CALF BRAINS ARE DELICIOUS, TOO.
WELL...
HUH?
22
HAPPY NEW YEAR. I HOPE YOU'RE HEALTHY AND HUNGRY AGAIN THIS YEAR.

第5話
究極VS至高鍋対決!!〈1〉

井賀田
TONIGHT IS THE NEW YEAR'S PARTY HOSTED BY PRESIDENT DAN OF DAIKEN PUBLISHING.
THE STAFF BEHIND THE 'ULTIMATE' AND 'SUPREME' MENUS FROM TOZAI NEWS AND TEITO NEWS HAVE BOTH BEEN INVITED.
2
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU ALL AGAIN THIS YEAR.
THE 'ULTIMATE' VS. 'SUPREME' MENU SHOWDOWN HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY POPULAR WITH READERS, TURNING INTO WEEKLY TIME'S FLAGSHIP FEATURE.
WITH KAIBARA YUZAN IN ATTENDANCE, IT'S TRULY A GATHERING OF BITTER RIVALS...


SINCE WE HAVE THE PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH THE 'ULTIMATE' AND 'SUPREME' MENUS HERE TODAY, AND ABOVE ALL, MR. KAIBARA IS PRESENT,
AFTER AGONIZING OVER WHAT KIND OF DISH TO SERVE, I DECIDED ON FUGU-CHIRI.

I SEE, SO THE RESPONSIBILITY LIES WITH US AS WE PICK AT THE POT.
YOU'VE REALLY THOUGHT THIS THROUGH.

I FIGURED AS LONG AS I PROVIDED HIGH-QUALITY PUFFERFISH, I COULD JUST LET YOU ALL HANDLE THE REST YOURSELVES.
WHETHER IT TASTES GOOD OR NOT IS NOT MY FAULT.

MY, PRESIDENT DAN IS A REAL RASCAL.
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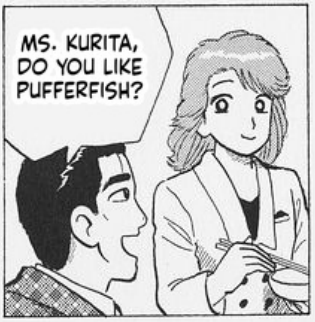
3

AND THE MILT?

IT'S SO LIGHT YET THE FLAVOR IS SO RICH; IT'S TRULY A MYSTERIOUS FISH.
YES, I LOVE IT.


MS. KURITA, DO YOU LIKE PUFFERFISH?

PLEASE, GIVE HER SOME MILT OVER HERE.
I'M SO GLAD, I FEEL THE SAME WAY!
OH, YES, PLEASE.
I LOVE FUGU MILT SO MUCH THAT I DON'T THINK ANYTHING ELSE CAN EASILY RIVAL ITS DELICIOUSNESS.
AH, I'M GOING TO SUCK THAT BACKBONE CLEAN TOO!
AH, GIVE ME THAT HEAD PIECE!
HEY-NOW, WHY IS PRESIDENT DAN AT THE SAME TABLE AS US?
HE'S NOT AT THE SAME TABLE AS US, HE'S AT THE SAME TABLE AS KURITA-KUN.
4
YOU PATHETIC GUY, PRESIDENT DAN IS GOING TO STEAL KURITA-KUN AWAY FROM YOU.
I CAN'T DEAL WITH THIS...
POOR SALARYMEN LIKE US HAVE TO STUFF OURSELVES WITH FUGU WHILE WE HAVE THE CHANCE!
THE VEGETABLES CAN WAIT.
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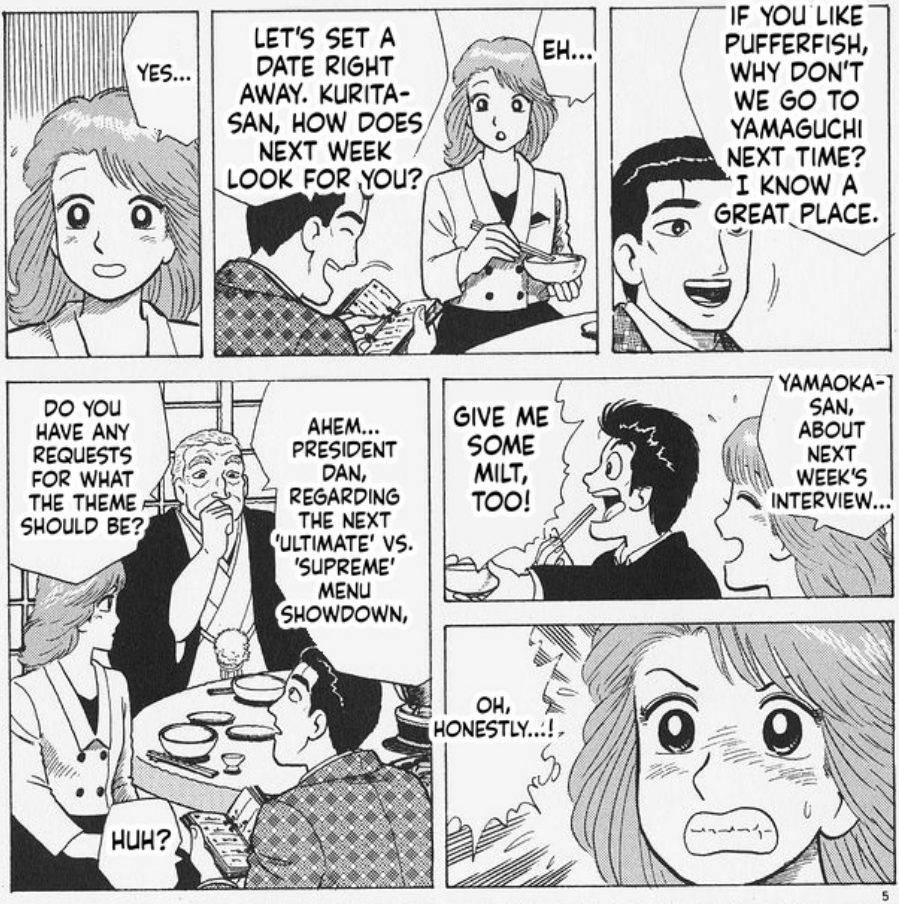
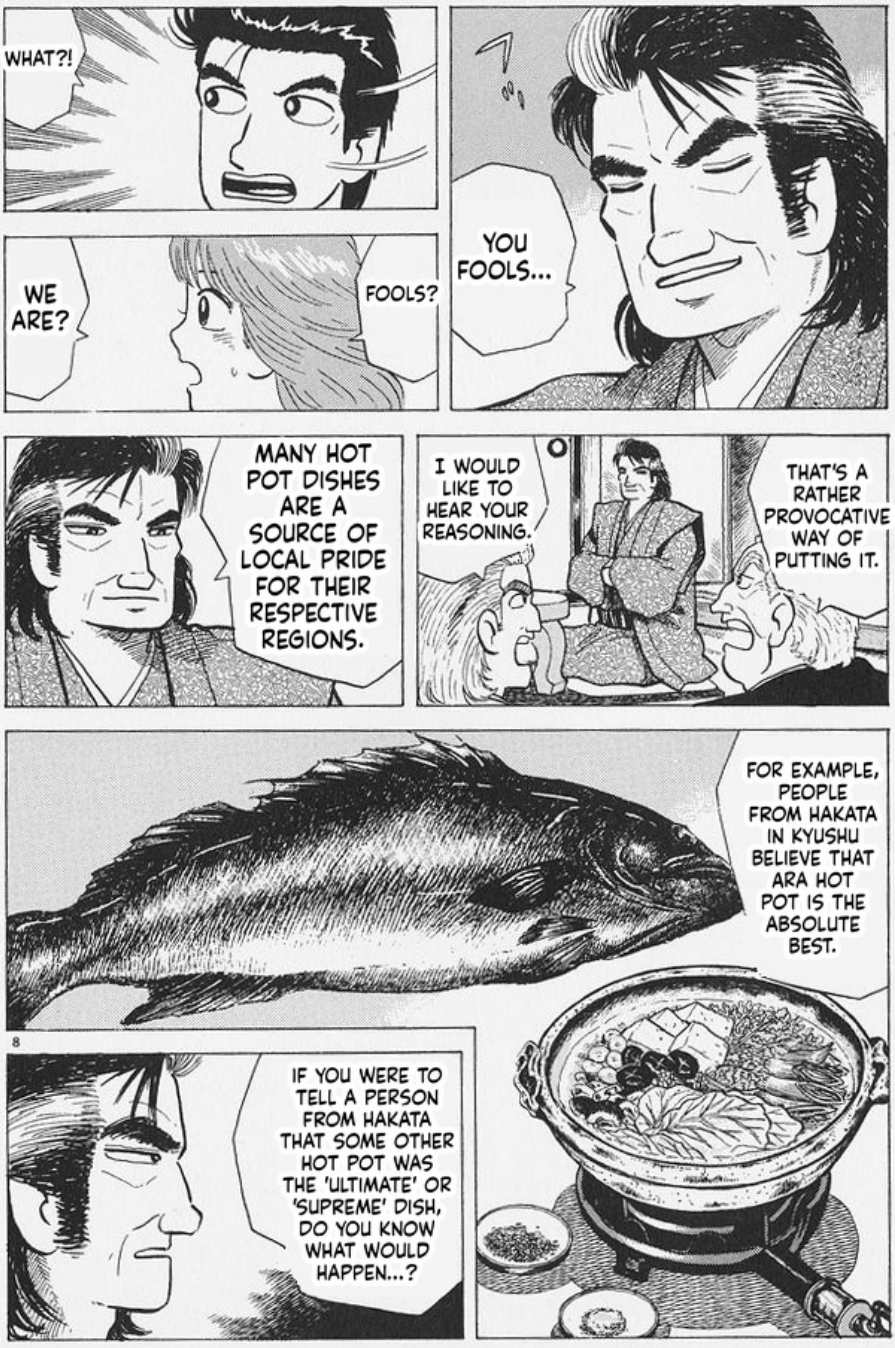
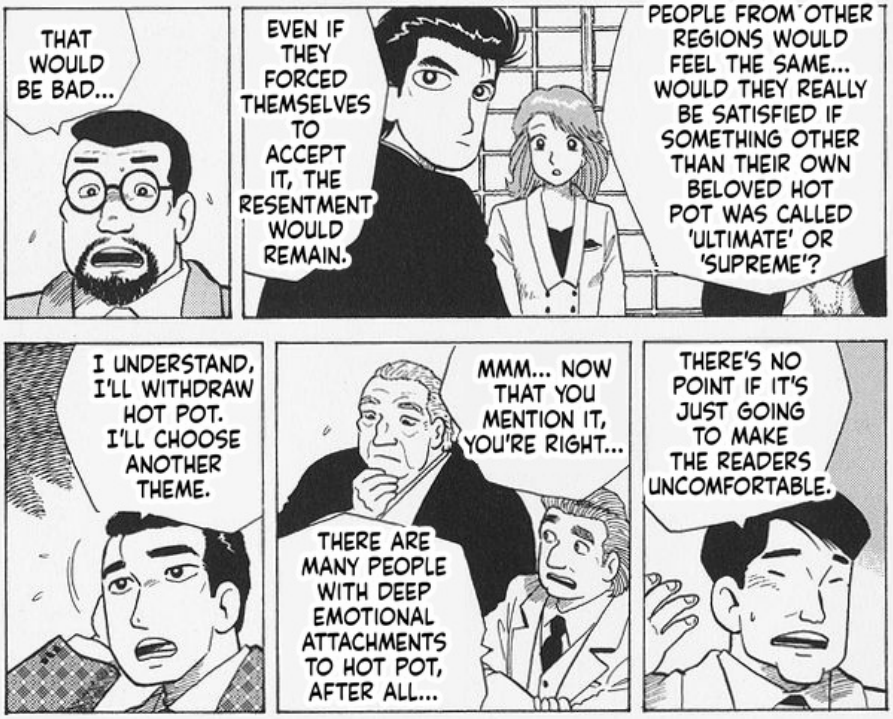
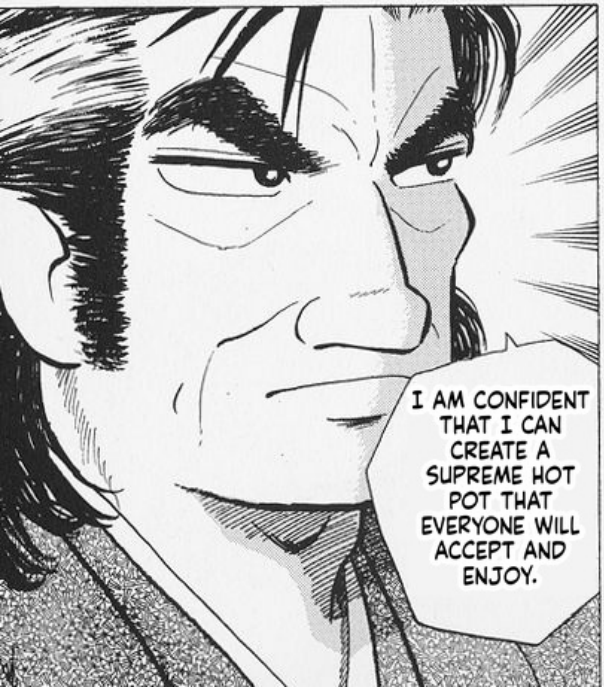

YES...
LET'S SET A DATE RIGHT AWAY. KURITA-SAN, HOW DOES NEXT WEEK LOOK FOR YOU?
EH...
IF YOU LIKE PUFFERFISH, WHY DON'T WE GO TO YAMAGUCHI NEXT TIME? I KNOW A GREAT PLACE.
DO YOU HAVE ANY REQUESTS FOR WHAT THE THEME SHOULD BE?
AHEM... PRESIDENT DAN, REGARDING THE NEXT 'ULTIMATE' VS. 'SUPREME' MENU SHOWDOWN,
HUH?
GIVE ME SOME MILT, TOO!
YAMAOKA-SAN, ABOUT NEXT WEEK'S INTERVIEW...
OH, HONESTLY...!
5
THAT SOUNDS INTERESTING.
I SEE, SO YOU INTEND TO SHOW YOUR RESPECT TO THE OWNER OF WEEKLY TIME.
YOU WANT ME TO CHOOSE THE THEME?
WHY NOT LET PRESIDENT DAN CHOOSE THE THEME FOR ONCE?
WHAT DO YOU SAY, TEITO NEWSPAPER?

SO, THAT'S WHAT WE'VE DECIDED.
THAT IS QUITE AN HONOR.
I HAVE NO OBJECTION.
SOUNDS GOOD. WHAT DO YOU THINK, MR. KAIBARA?
WHAT, HOT POT?
WELL THEN, NEXT TIME...
THEN, HOW ABOUT A HOT POT DISH?
6
THEY EXIST IN CHINA TOO, BUT NOT IN SUCH GREAT VARIETY AS IN JAPAN.
INDEED, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, HOT POT DISHES SEEM TO BE UNIQUE TO JAPAN.
WHEN IT COMES TO WESTERN CUISINE, YOU COULD SAY HOT POT IS VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT.

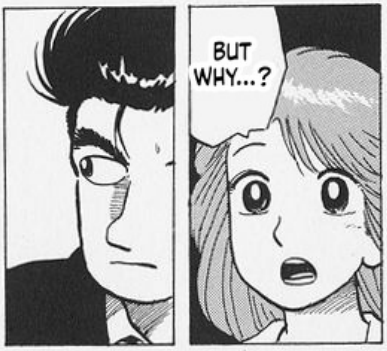
OUT OF ALL THE MANY TYPES OF JAPANESE HOT POT DISHES, WHICH ONE IS THE MOST DELICIOUS...
THE ULTIMATE HOT POT, THE SUPREME HOT POT... WHAT EXACTLY COULD THEY BE...
I WOULD LIKE THAT TO BE THE THEME FOR THE NEXT CONFRONTATION.
I'M FOR IT! WHAT DO YOU THINK, MR. KAIBARA?
INTERESTING! THAT SOUNDS GREAT!
ASK THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' FIRST.
WHAT IS THE OPINION OF THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU'?
FINE BY ME. I WILL TAKE ON THE CHALLENGE OF THE ULTIMATE HOT POT.
I AGREE. THIS LOOKS LIKE IT WILL BE INTERESTING.


WHAT?!
YOU FOOLS...
WE ARE?
FOOLS?
MANY HOT POT DISHES ARE A SOURCE OF LOCAL PRIDE FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE REGIONS.
I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR REASONING.
THAT'S A RATHER PROVOCATIVE WAY OF PUTTING IT.
FOR EXAMPLE, PEOPLE FROM HAKATA IN KYUSHU BELIEVE THAT ARA HOT POT IS THE ABSOLUTE BEST.
8
IF YOU WERE TO TELL A PERSON FROM HAKATA THAT SOME OTHER HOT POT WAS THE 'ULTIMATE' OR 'SUPREME' DISH, DO YOU KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN...?


THAT WOULD BE BAD...
EVEN IF THEY FORCED THEMSELVES TO ACCEPT IT, THE RESENTMENT WOULD REMAIN.
PEOPLE FROM OTHER REGIONS WOULD FEEL THE SAME... WOULD THEY REALLY BE SATISFIED IF SOMETHING OTHER THAN THEIR OWN BELOVED HOT POT WAS CALLED 'ULTIMATE' OR 'SUPREME'?
I UNDERSTAND, I'LL WITHDRAW HOT POT. I'LL CHOOSE ANOTHER THEME.
MMM... NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, YOU'RE RIGHT...
THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WITH DEEP EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS TO HOT POT, AFTER ALL...
THERE'S NO POINT IF IT'S JUST GOING TO MAKE THE READERS UNCOMFORTABLE.


I AM CONFIDENT THAT I CAN CREATE A SUPREME HOT POT THAT EVERYONE WILL ACCEPT AND ENJOY.

NO, PLEASE DON'T WITHDRAW IT... I WANT TO HAVE A SHOWDOWN WITH HOT POT DISHES.


BUT WHY...?

OH! AS EXPECTED OF MR. KAIBARA!
A HOT POT DISH THAT EVERYONE WOULD ACCEPT AND ENJOY!
AND YOU, FOR EXAMPLE, COULD YOU MAKE A HOT POT DISH THAT EVEN SOMEONE FROM HAKATA WOULD HONESTLY ADMIT IS BETTER THAN ARA-NABE,
DO YOU HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO MAKE IT?

I'LL SHOW YOU THAT I CAN MAKE IT TOO!
THE ULTIMATE HOT POT DISH THAT EVERYONE WILL ACCEPT!

NOW, YOU'RE OVERTHINKING IT.
西新聞社
IF A BETTER RECIPE EXISTS, I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO MAKE IT OUR OWN.
IT'S TRUE, IT'S TRUE! WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN OUR CHICKEN HOT POT,
IF THERE'S ANY HOT POT TASTIER THAN THIS, I'D SWITCH TO IT IN A HEARTBEAT.
WHEN IT COMES TO MY HOUSE, IT'S ALWAYS PORK SHABU-SHABU,
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, I'M NOT OFFENDED AT ALL.
PORK SHABU-SHABU AND CHICKEN HOT POT?
IT'S A SEAFOOD HOT POT, A LUXURIOUS ONE USING THE FINEST CATCH FROM EDO BAY.
WELL THEN, MRS. ARAKAWA, WHAT KIND OF HOT POT DO YOU SERVE AT YOUR PLACE?
WHAT?!
HMPH, IF THAT'S THE KIND OF HOT POT YOU'RE EATING, OF COURSE YOU'D SWITCH SO EASILY.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING. SHABU-SHABU PORK IS FAR SUPERIOR TO AN IMPURE MESS LIKE YOSE-NABE!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? COMBINING ALL THOSE DIFFERENT FLAVORS IS EXACTLY WHAT CREATES A RICH, COMPLEX DEPTH!
THROWING EVERY LITTLE THING TOGETHER JUST SHOWS A POVERTY OF SPIRIT. IT MUDDIES THE FLAVOR.
CHE! AND HERE I WAS WONDERING WHAT KIND OF AMAZING HOT POT IT WOULD BE,

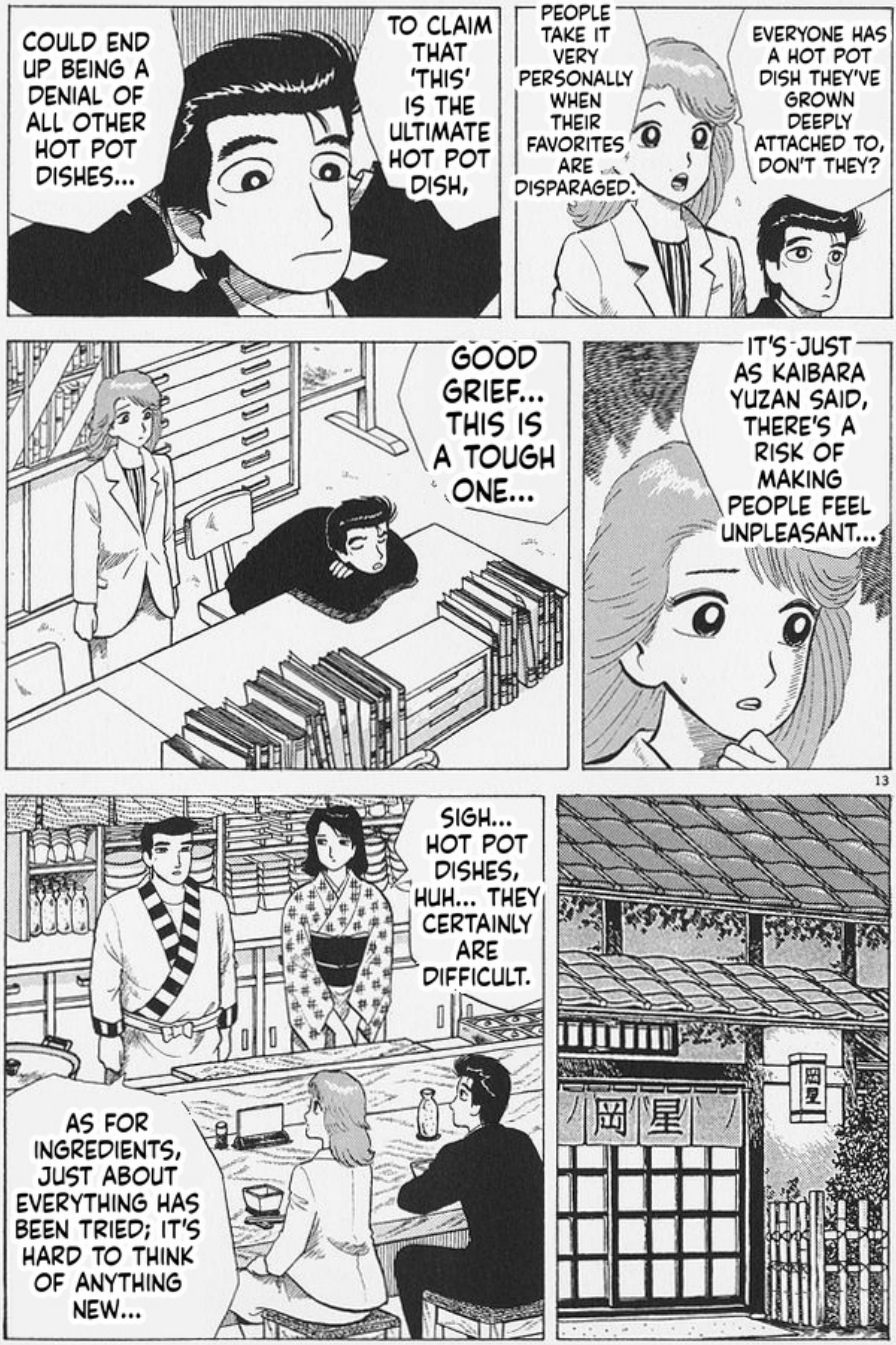
HOT POT MEANS SUKIYAKI! SUKIYAKI IS THE KING OF ALL HOT POT DISHES!
わはははは
HOW PATHETIC, ALL OF YOU! STOP EATING SUCH CHEAP, LOW-CLASS HOT POTS!

12

OYSTER HOT POT IS THE ABSOLUTE BEST!
PAH! LISTEN TO THESE PAUPERS TALK!
NO WAY, HORSE MEAT HOT POT IS NUMBER ONE!
KIRITANPO!
SOFT-SHELL TURTLE!

THERE GOES TOMII AGAIN WITH THE SHABU-SHABU SPEECH.

YOU GUYS GREW UP IN AN ERA WHERE YOU COULDN'T EAT YOUR FILL OF MEAT, SO YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR ANYTHING THAT JUST SMELLS LIKE IT.


COULD END UP BEING A DENIAL OF ALL OTHER HOT POT DISHES...
TO CLAIM THAT 'THIS' IS THE ULTIMATE HOT POT DISH,
AND PEOPLE TAKE IT VERY PERSONALLY WHEN THEIR FAVORITES ARE DISPARAGED.
EVERYONE HAS A HOT POT DISH THEY'VE GROWN DEEPLY ATTACHED TO, DON'T THEY?
GOOD GRIEF... THIS IS A TOUGH ONE...
IT'S JUST AS KAIBARA YUZAN SAID, THERE'S A RISK OF MAKING PEOPLE FEEL UNPLEASANT...
13
SIGH... HOT POT DISHES, HUH... THEY CERTAINLY ARE DIFFICULT.
AS FOR INGREDIENTS, JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING HAS BEEN TRIED; IT'S HARD TO THINK OF ANYTHING NEW...
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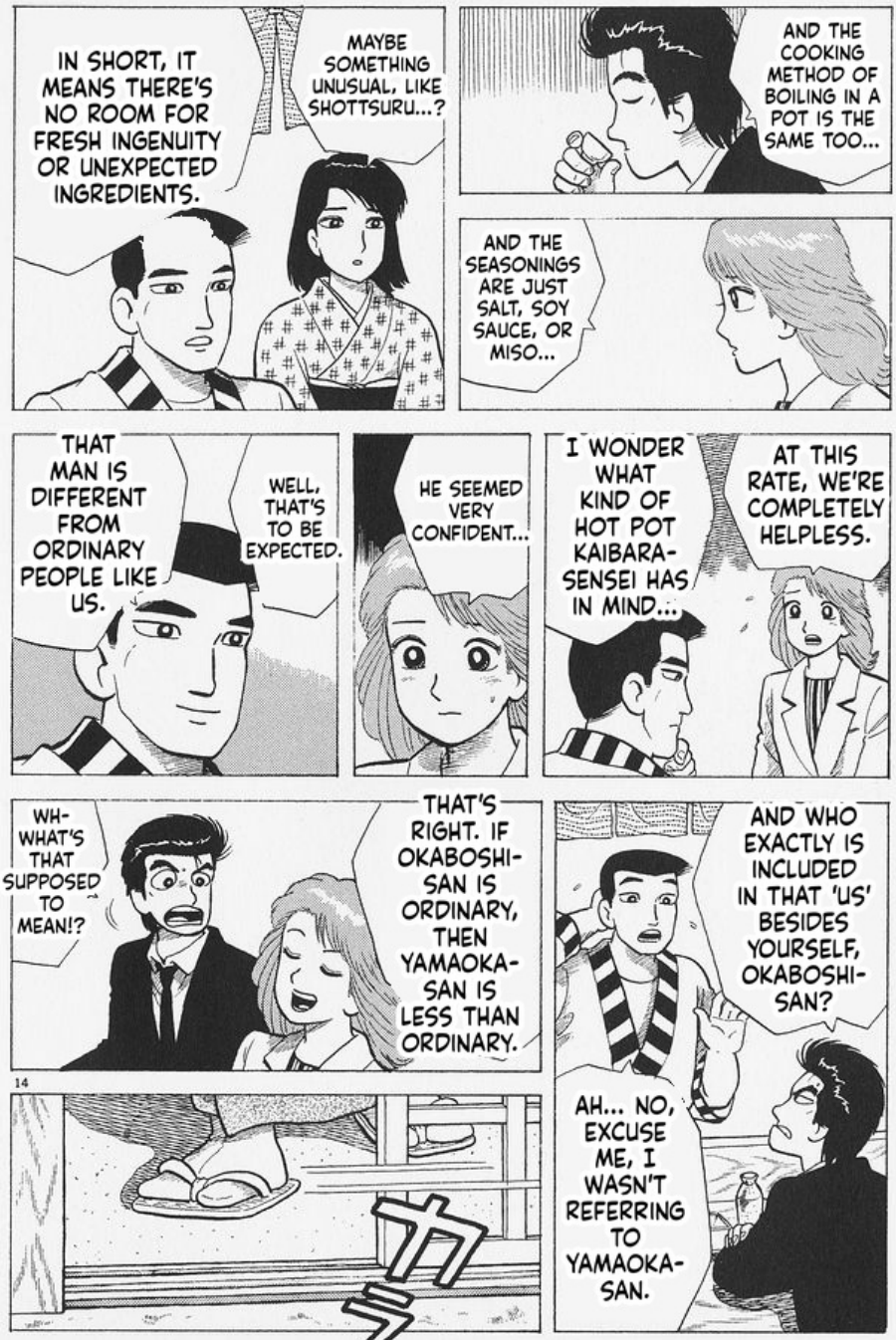
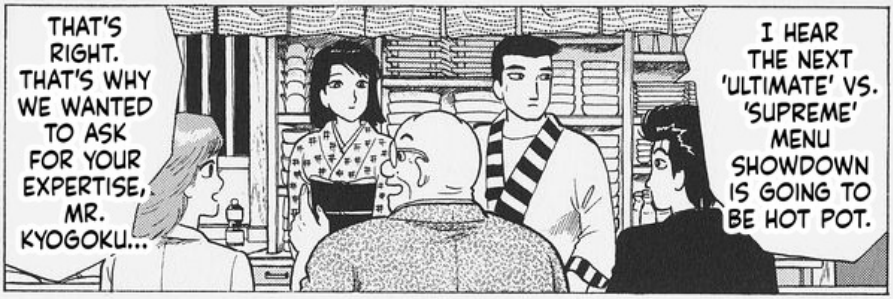
岡星


IN SHORT, IT MEANS THERE'S NO ROOM FOR FRESH INGENUITY OR UNEXPECTED INGREDIENTS.
MAYBE SOMETHING UNUSUAL, LIKE SHOTTSURU...?
AND THE COOKING METHOD OF BOILING IN A POT IS THE SAME TOO...
AND THE SEASONINGS ARE JUST SALT, SOY SAUCE, OR MISO...
THAT MAN IS DIFFERENT FROM ORDINARY PEOPLE LIKE US.
WELL, THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED.
HE SEEMED VERY CONFIDENT...
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF HOT POT KAIBARA-SENSEI HAS IN MIND...
AT THIS RATE, WE'RE COMPLETELY HELPLESS.
WH-WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN!?
THAT'S RIGHT. IF OKABOSHI-SAN IS ORDINARY, THEN YAMAOKA-SAN IS LESS THAN ORDINARY.
14
カラ
AND WHO EXACTLY IS INCLUDED IN THAT 'US' BESIDES YOURSELF, OKABOSHI-SAN?
AH... NO, EXCUSE ME, I WASN'T REFERRING TO YAMAOKA-SAN.

AH, SORRY, SORRY. I ENDED UP BEING LATE.
I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU WHILE YOU'RE BUSY.
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
HECHIKAN?
HOW STRANGE... I'M SURE THAT WAS HECHIKAN...
ARE YOU BEING CHASED BY DEBT COLLECTORS?
DON'T SAY SUCH STUPID THINGS.
15
THERE'S NO WAY HECHIKAN WOULD BE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
WELL, WHATEVER. I MUST HAVE MISSEEN HIM.
OH, IS THAT A PERSON'S NAME...?
WHEN YOU SAY HECHIKAN, DO YOU MEAN *THE* MASTER HECHIKAN!?
EH!


THAT'S RIGHT. THAT'S WHY WE WANTED TO ASK FOR YOUR EXPERTISE, MR. KYOGOKU...
I HEAR THE NEXT 'ULTIMATE' VS. 'SUPREME' MENU SHOWDOWN IS GOING TO BE HOT POT.

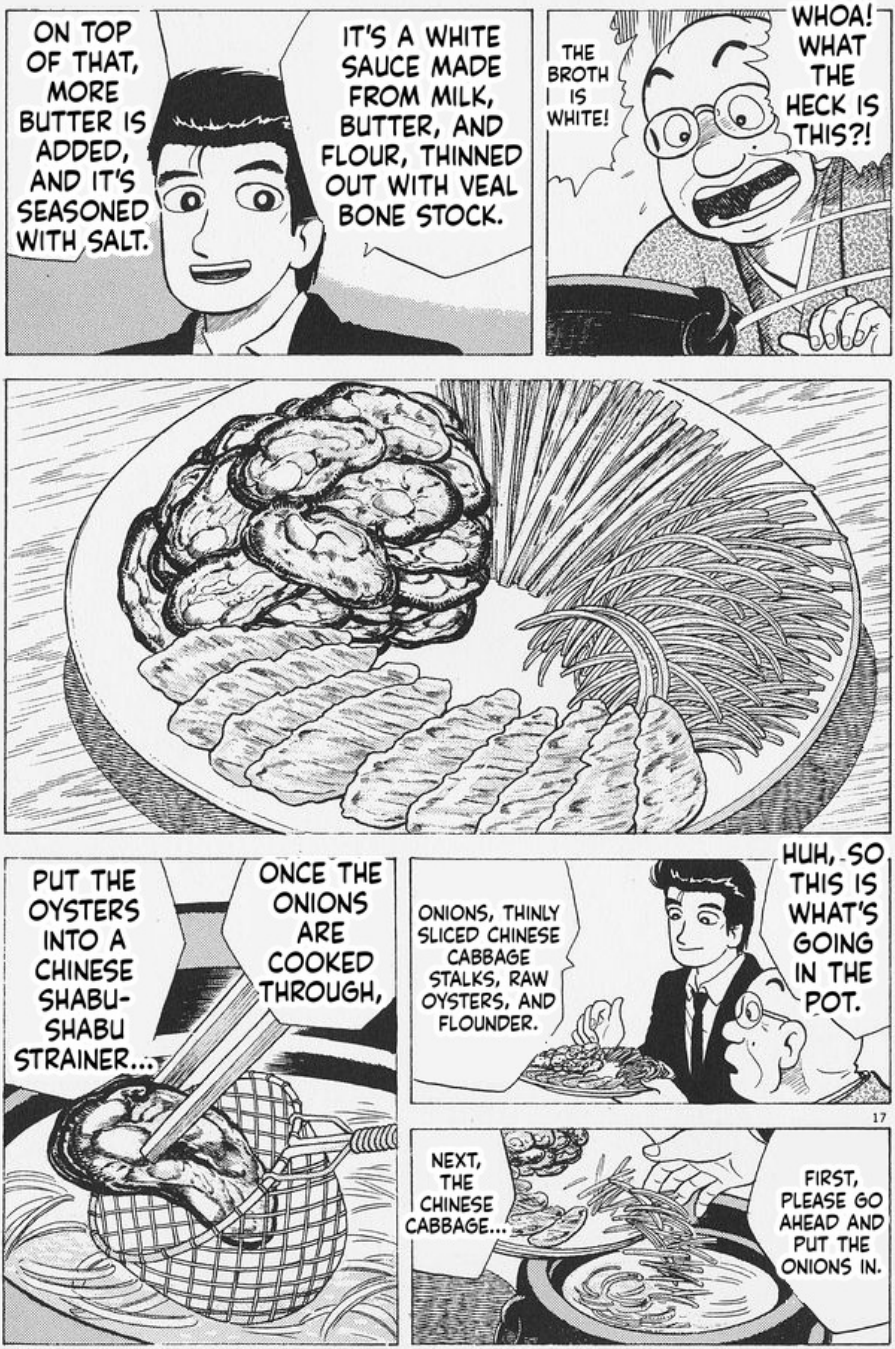
JUST KIDDING, I'M KIDDING!
I JUST REMEMBERED I HAVE SOMETHING I NEED TO DO.

EH? HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WAS CAT?

SO, WHAT KIND DID YOU HAVE IN MIND? SOFT-SHELL TURTLE? RACCOON DOG? CAT?
OH, LEAVE THE HOT POT TO ME.

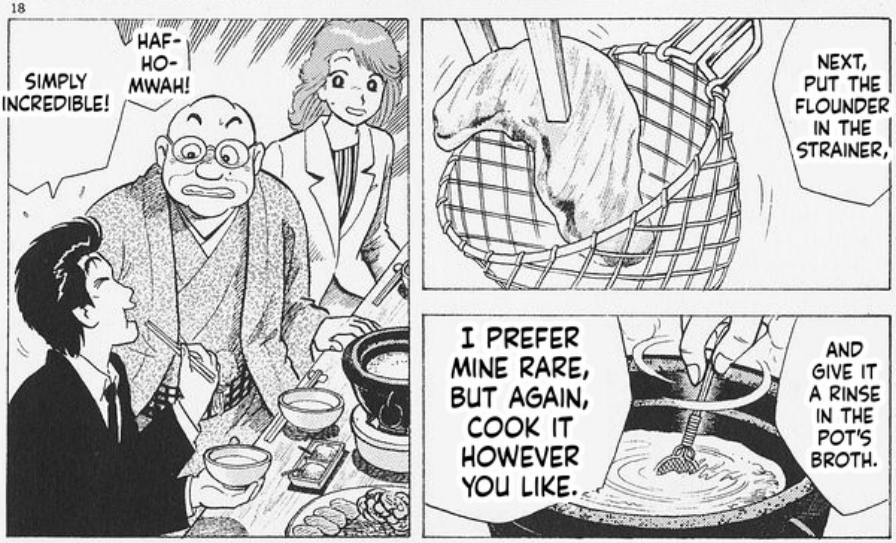
16

HURRY UP AND LET ME TASTE IT ALREADY!
AGH, YOU WICKED BRAT!


ON TOP OF THAT, MORE BUTTER IS ADDED, AND IT'S SEASONED WITH SALT.
IT'S A WHITE SAUCE MADE FROM MILK, BUTTER, AND FLOUR, THINNED OUT WITH VEAL BONE STOCK.
THE BROTH IS WHITE!
WHOA! WHAT THE HECK IS THIS?!
PUT THE OYSTERS INTO A CHINESE SHABU-SHABU STRAINER...
ONCE THE ONIONS ARE COOKED THROUGH,
ONIONS, THINLY SLICED CHINESE CABBAGE STALKS, RAW OYSTERS, AND FLOUNDER.
HUH, SO THIS IS WHAT'S GOING IN THE POT.
17
NEXT, THE CHINESE CABBAGE...
FIRST, PLEASE GO AHEAD AND PUT THE ONIONS IN.

TAKE SOME OF THE BROTH BEFOREHAND, ADD PEPPER OR CHILI TO TASTE, AND DIP IT IN THAT.
ONCE IT'S COOKED TO YOUR LIKING, TRANSFER IT TO A SMALL BOWL.
ゴクリ
THIS FLAVOR, EVEN IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF...!
MMM... THE SWEETNESS OF RAW OYSTERS, THE SCENT OF THE TIDE!

18


SIMPLY INCREDIBLE!
HAF-HO-MWAH!
NEXT, PUT THE FLOUNDER IN THE STRAINER,
I PREFER MINE RARE, BUT AGAIN, COOK IT HOWEVER YOU LIKE.
AND GIVE IT A RINSE IN THE POT'S BROTH.

AAHN, ME TOO!
CONFOUND IT! STOP TEASING US!
AH, THE SWEET JUICE OF THE OYSTER MEAT IS SQUISHING OUT IN MY MOUTH...!
AHYAAA! THE BRINY SCENT OF THE OYSTERS EXPANDS INTO A TRULY RICH AROMA WHEN PAIRED WITH THE WHITE SAUCE!
AND THESE NAPA CABBAGE STALKS ARE IRRESISTIBLE! THEY'RE SO CRUNCHY AND SWEET...
THE ONIONS AND THE WHITE SAUCE REALLY BRING OUT THE BEST IN EACH OTHER'S FLAVORS!
SUCH A SOFT AND GENTLE TASTE!
THE FLOUNDER IS SO SNAPPY AND FRESH, IT'S DANCING ON MY TONGUE!
SOMEONE WITH A BAD STOMACH WOULD BE CURED JUST BY TAKING ONE BITE OF THIS!

19

ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED THE TOPPINGS, GO AHEAD AND ADD THE RICE.
MUHO! MUHA! FUHYO!
AAH, I CAN'T STOP!
WELL, JUST GIVE IT A TRY.
I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE IT!
WHOA! WHITE SAUCE-STYLE RICE PORRIDGE?!
20

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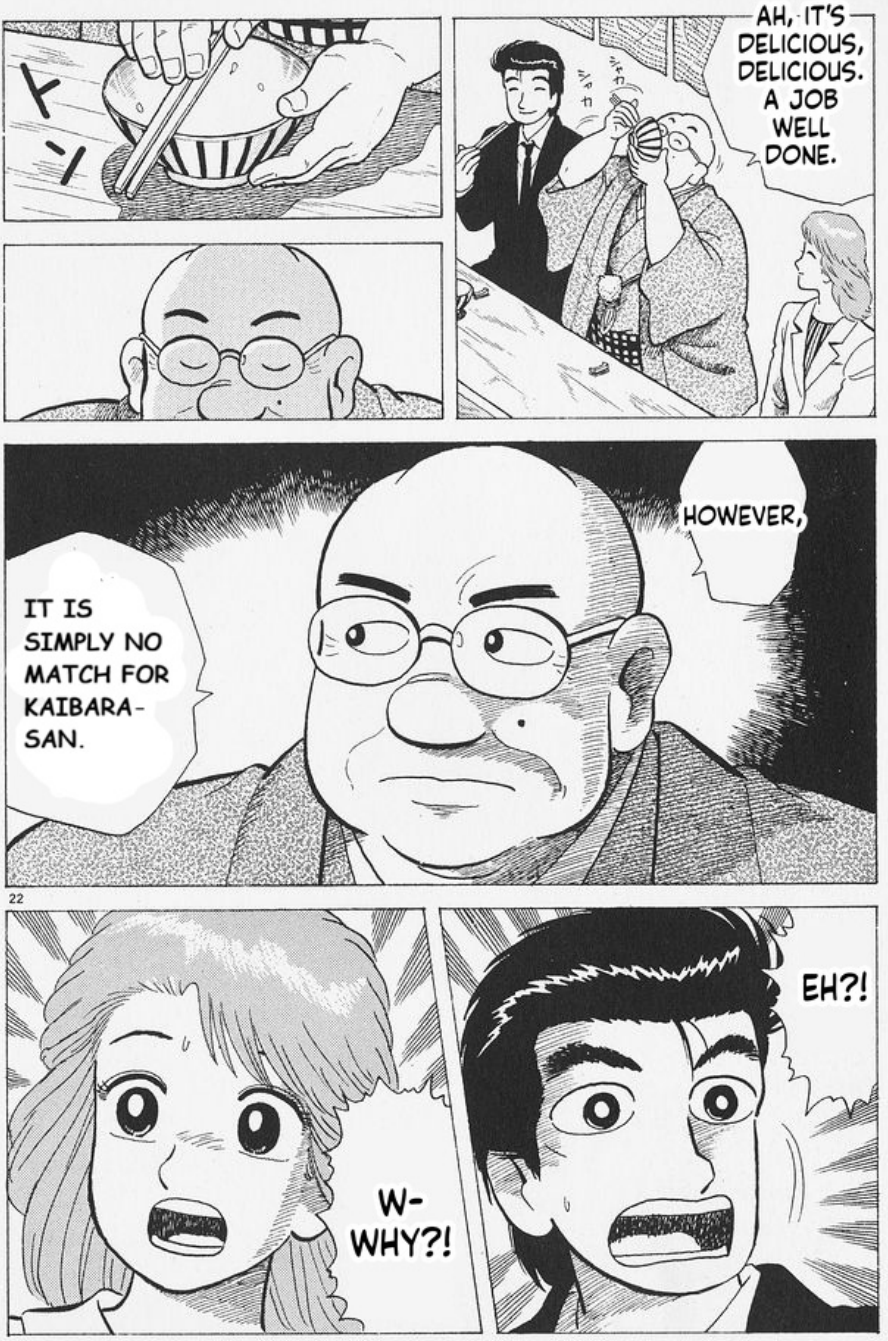
フーフー
THIS IS MAGNIFICENT!
FAR FROM BEING OUT OF PLACE, A WHITE SAUCE HOT POT IS ACTUALLY QUITE GOOD!
I'M SURPRISED AT HOW WELL THE RICE GOES WITH THIS.
IT DOESN'T FEEL OUT OF PLACE AT ALL.
COME TO THINK OF IT, THE TASTE IS A BIT LIKE RICE GRATIN.
21
THEN WE CAN REST EASY.
ほっ
IF IT PASSES MR. KYOGOKU'S TASTE TEST, WE'RE ALL SET!!
I'M SO GLAD MR. KYOGOKU PRAISED IT!



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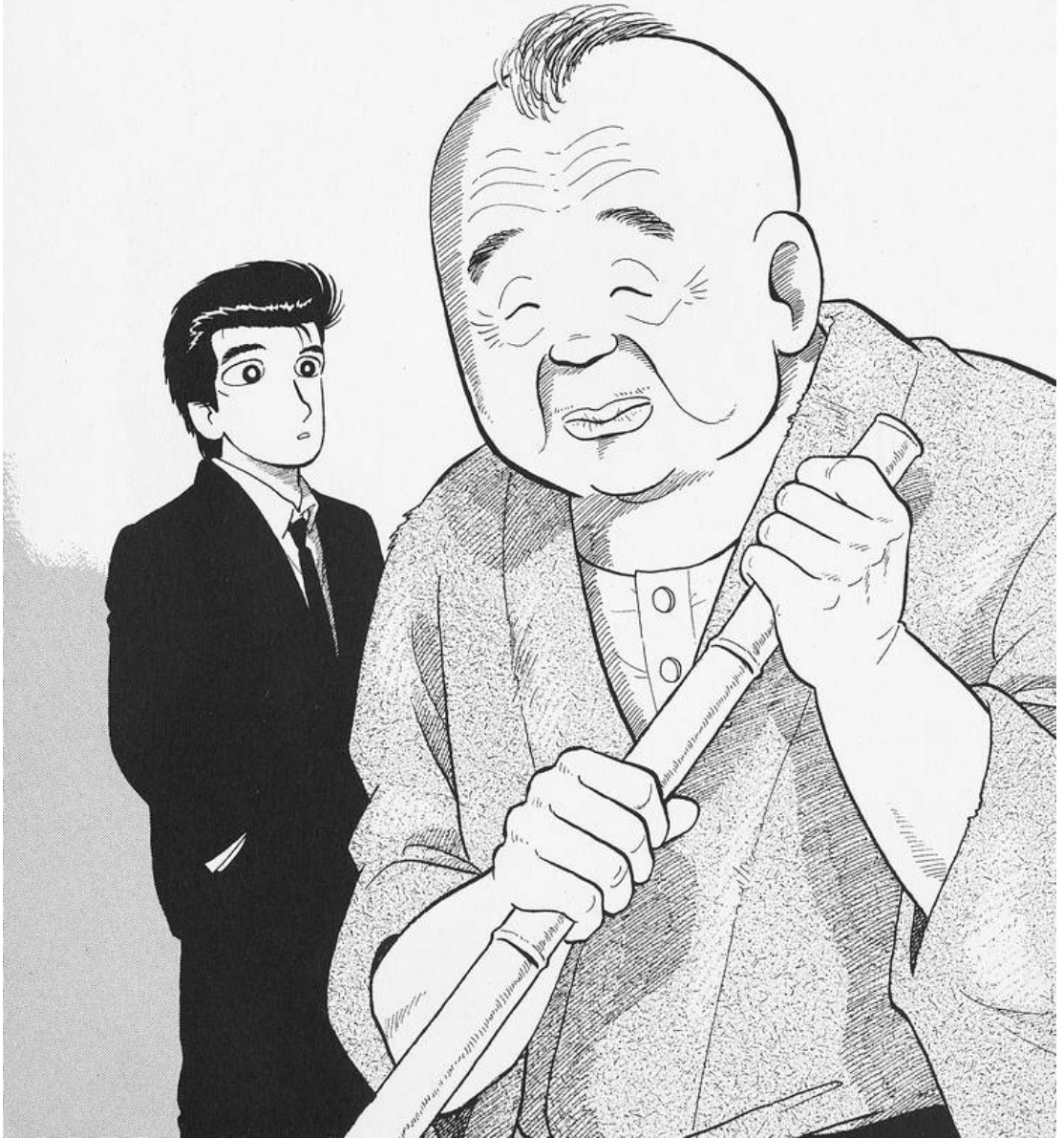
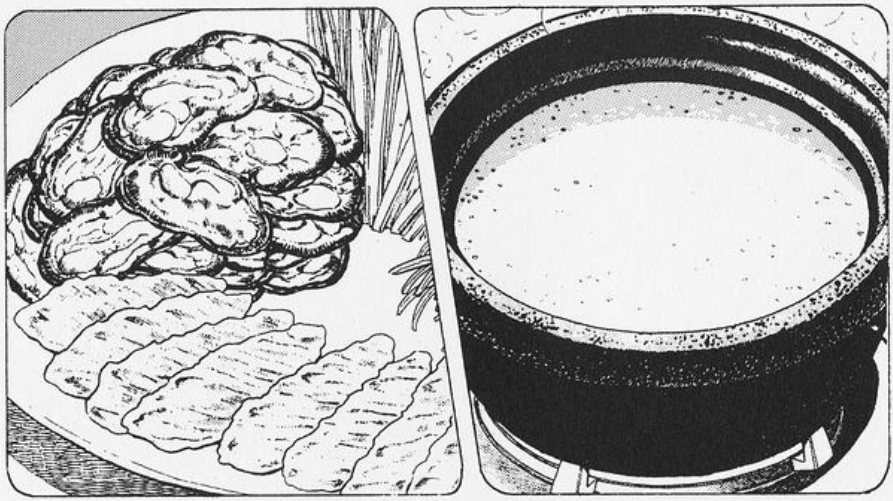


MR. KYOGOKU, WHY DO YOU SAY THIS HOT POT CAN'T BEAT KAIBARA YUZAN?



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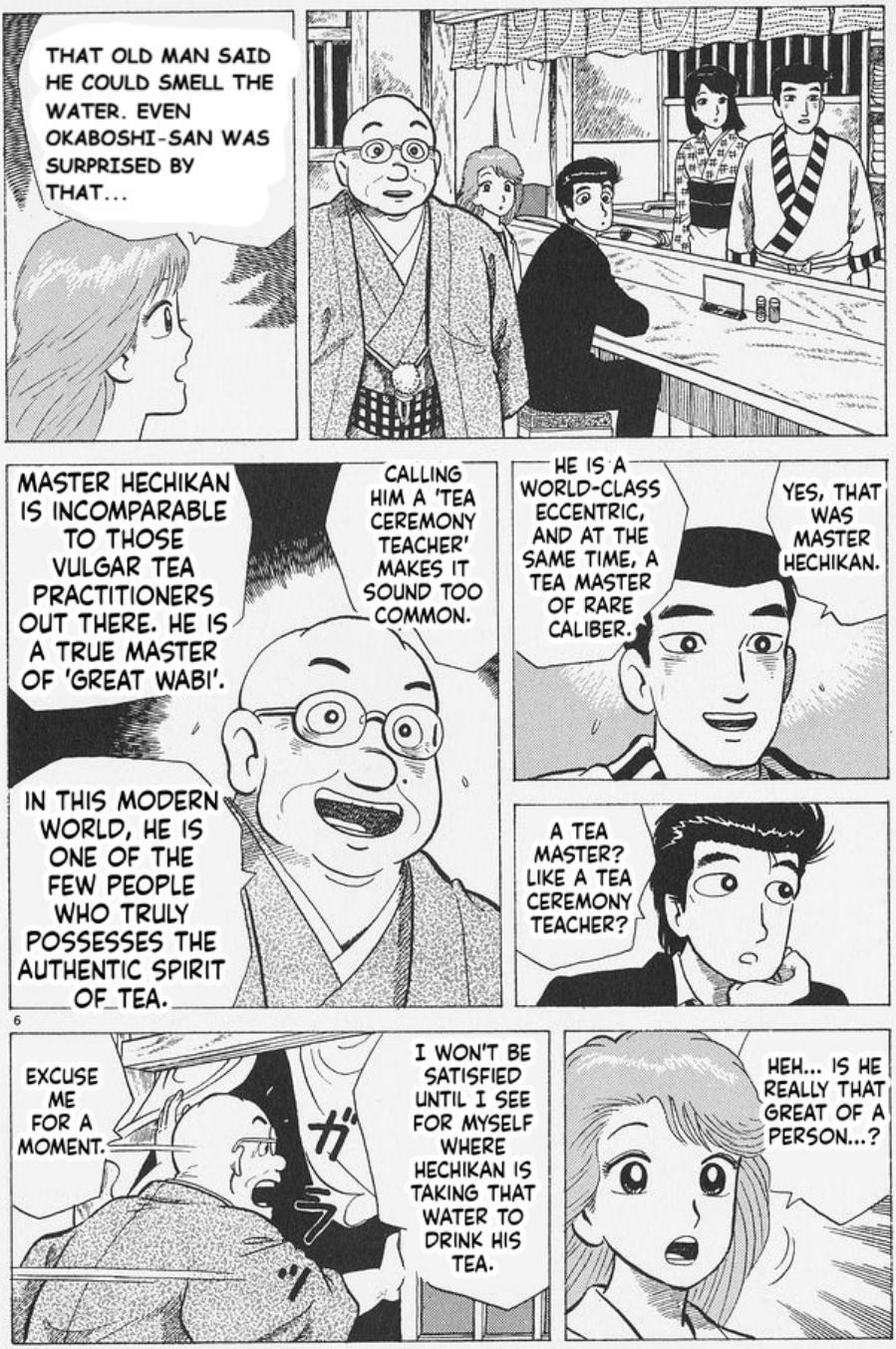
WELL, YOU SEE...

EVEN THOUGH YOU PRAISED THIS HOT POT, SAYING IT WAS A MASTERPIECE...

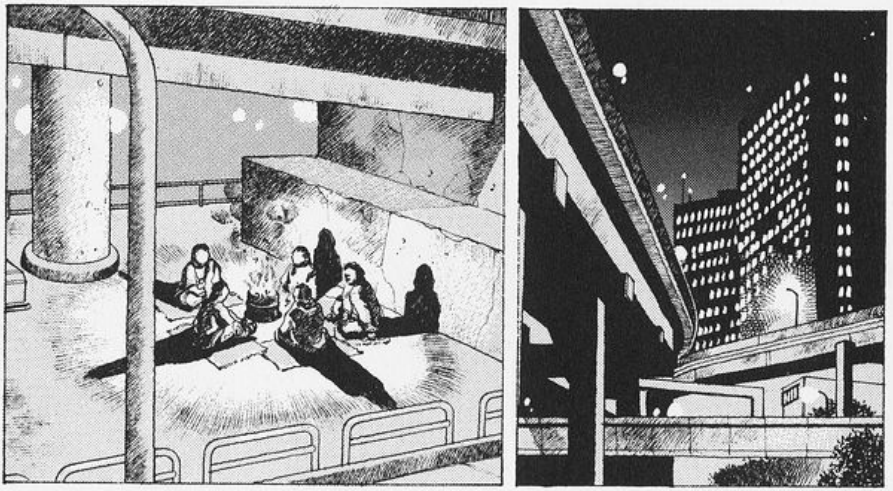
I'M SORRY.
THE BASIS FOR THAT IS, FIRST OF ALL...
O-OH, YOU'RE...!
3
BUT TOKYO IS A DREADFUL CITY; THERE ISN'T A DROP OF GOOD WATER TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE.
INDEED, I HAD PLANNED TO MEET SOME COMPANIONS AND HAVE SOME TEA,
BUT COULD YOU SPARE ME SOME WATER?
I KNOW IT'S BRAZEN OF ME TO BARGE IN AND ASK A COMPLETE STRANGER FOR A FAVOR,
W-WATER...?

THE SCENT OF SWEET, DELICIOUS-LOOKING WATER WAS DRIFTING ALL THE WAY OUTSIDE THE SHOP.
YES, EXACTLY.
YES, THE WATER WE USE FOR COOKING IS FRESH SPRING WATER DELIVERED DAILY FROM MOUNT TAKAO.
YOU'VE GOT SOME FINE WATER HERE.
PLEASE, TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE.
WHAT?! YOU CAUGHT THE SCENT OF THE WATER WHILE WALKING OUTSIDE?!
I'M VERY GRATEFUL. PLEASE FILL THIS HALFWAY.
OH, THIS IS A MAGNIFICENT HAND-FORGED KETTLE...
HAHAHA... THERE'S NO NEED FOR PRAISE. THIS IS ALL I HAVE, AFTER ALL.
4
JUST WHO ON EARTH IS THIS OLD MAN...?

HERE YOU GO.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
WE MET ONCE BEFORE AT MASTER TOUJIN TOYAMA'S HOME.
MASTER HECHIKAN, IT IS KYOGOKU.
FORGIVE ME, I DID NOT MEAN TO INTRUDE ON YOUR MEAL.
WELL THEN, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
ASK THE WIND.
I TRULY APOLOGIZE FOR MY RUDENESS...
AH, IS THAT SO? I'M AFRAID MY MEMORY IS QUITE POOR.
5
HOW LONG WILL YOU BE STAYING IN TOKYO?
NO, NO, NOT AT ALL.


THAT OLD MAN SAID HE COULD SMELL THE WATER. EVEN OKABOSHI-SAN WAS SURPRISED BY THAT...
MASTER HECHIKAN IS INCOMPARABLE TO THOSE VULGAR TEA PRACTITIONERS OUT THERE. HE IS A TRUE MASTER OF 'GREAT WABI'.
CALLING HIM A 'TEA CEREMONY TEACHER' MAKES IT SOUND TOO COMMON.
IN THIS MODERN WORLD, HE IS ONE OF THE FEW PEOPLE WHO TRULY POSSESSES THE AUTHENTIC SPIRIT OF TEA.
HE IS A WORLD-CLASS ECCENTRIC, AND AT THE SAME TIME, A TEA MASTER OF RARE CALIBER.
YES, THAT WAS MASTER HECHIKAN.
A TEA MASTER? LIKE A TEA CEREMONY TEACHER?
6
EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT.
ガラ
I WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL I SEE FOR MYSELF WHERE HECHIKAN IS TAKING THAT WATER TO DRINK HIS TEA.
HEH... IS HE REALLY THAT GREAT OF A PERSON...?

HEY! WHAT ABOUT MY DINNER?!
OH, EVEN MR. OKABOSHI.
ME TOO.



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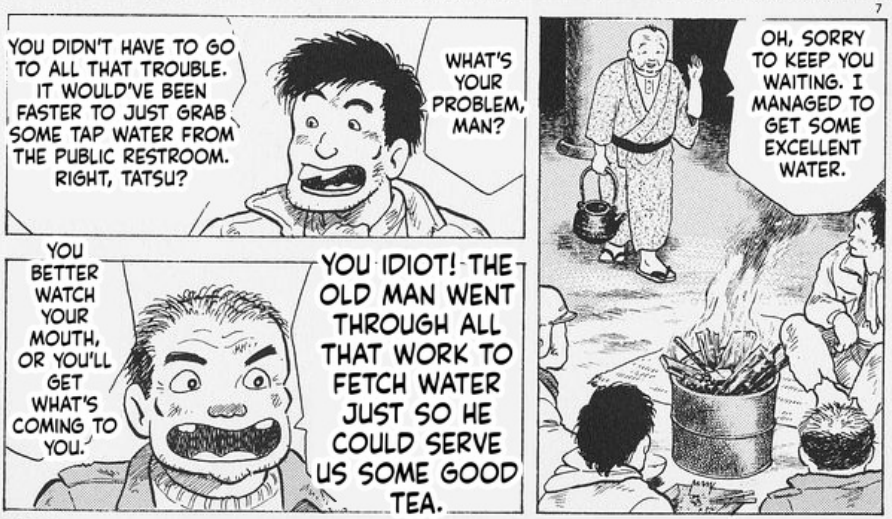
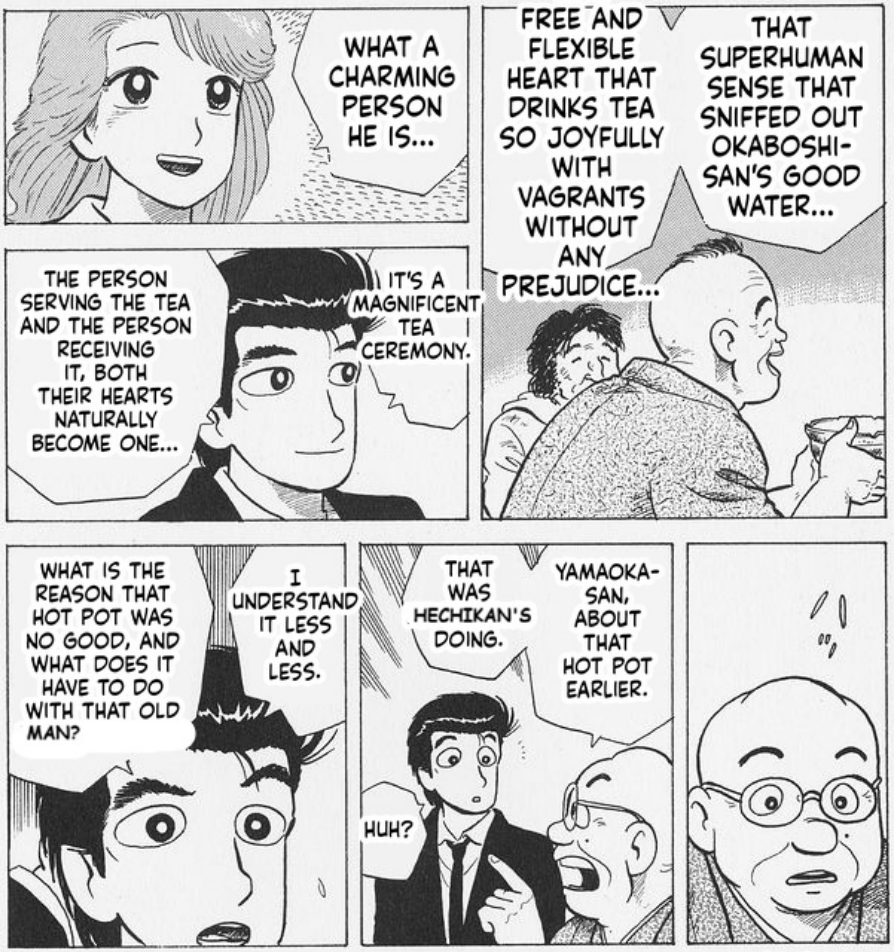

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO GO TO ALL THAT TROUBLE. IT WOULD'VE BEEN FASTER TO JUST GRAB SOME TAP WATER FROM THE PUBLIC RESTROOM. RIGHT, TATSU?
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, MAN?
YOU BETTER WATCH YOUR MOUTH, OR YOU'LL GET WHAT'S COMING TO YOU.
YOU IDIOT! THE OLD MAN WENT THROUGH ALL THAT WORK TO FETCH WATER JUST SO HE COULD SERVE US SOME GOOD TEA.
OH, SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING. I MANAGED TO GET SOME EXCELLENT WATER.

I'LL BREW YOU SOME DELICIOUS TEA.
COME NOW, LET'S GET THE WATER BOILING.
OH, LOOK, THAT'S TATSU-SAN OVER THERE.
YEAH, IT'S BEEN A WHILE, BUT HE LOOKS WELL.
I THOUGHT HE WAS HAVING TEA WITH SOMEONE VERY IMPORTANT...
DR. HECHIKAN IS WITH THOSE VAGRANTS...
コポポ…
8
シャシャシャシャ

TEA IS DELICIOUS!
ぷへー
ゲビ ゲビ
WELL, MATCHA CERTAINLY IS A POWDER FOR INSTANT GREEN TEA.
HAHAHA, INSTANT GREEN TEA POWDER, IS IT?
I THOUGHT IT'D JUST BE BITTER, BUT MAN, IT REALLY CLEARS OUT THE PALATE.
HEY, IS THIS INSTANT GREEN TEA POWDER?
HEY, YOU, EVEN IF IT'S JUST DISSOLVING POWDER IN HOT WATER, THIS IS WAY BETTER THAN INSTANT COFFEE.
9
TRULY FREE AND UNFETTERED, WITHOUT A HINT OF PRETENSION...
MASTER HECHIKAN... WHAT A MAGNIFICENT MAN... SOCIAL STATUS MEANS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IN HIS EYES.
THIS IS WHAT REAL TEA IS ALL ABOUT...
...SIMPLY WONDERFUL...


WHAT A CHARMING PERSON HE IS...
THAT FREE AND FLEXIBLE HEART THAT DRINKS TEA SO JOYFULLY WITH VAGRANTS WITHOUT ANY PREJUDICE...
THAT SUPERHUMAN SENSE THAT SNIFFED OUT OKABOSHI-SAN'S GOOD WATER...
IT'S A MAGNIFICENT TEA CEREMONY.
THE PERSON SERVING THE TEA AND THE PERSON RECEIVING IT, BOTH THEIR HEARTS NATURALLY BECOME ONE...
I UNDERSTAND IT LESS AND LESS.
WHAT IS THE REASON THAT HOT POT WAS NO GOOD, AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH THAT OLD MAN?
YAMAOKA-SAN, ABOUT THAT HOT POT EARLIER.
THAT WAS HECHIKAN'S DOING.
HUH?
10
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND ONCE YOU'VE BEEN TREATED TO TEA BY MASTER HECHIKAN.
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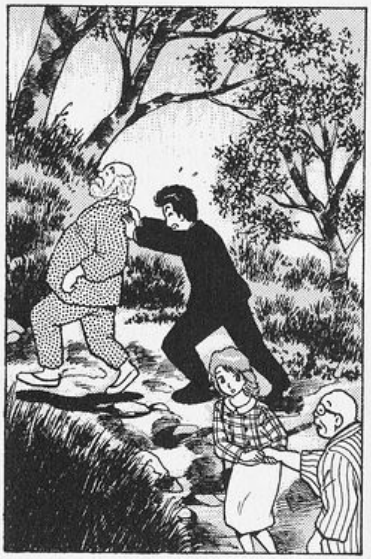
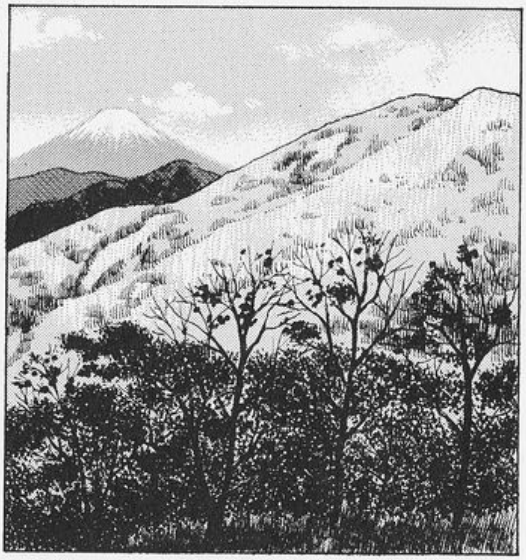
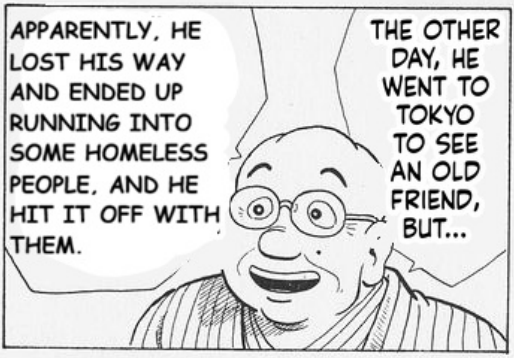
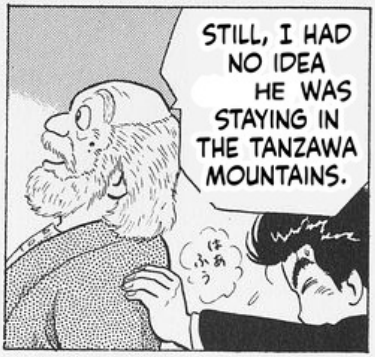





APPARENTLY, HE LOST HIS WAY AND ENDED UP RUNNING INTO SOME HOMELESS PEOPLE, AND HE HIT IT OFF WITH THEM.
THE OTHER DAY, HE WENT TO TOKYO TO SEE AN OLD FRIEND, BUT...


STILL, I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS STAYING IN THE TANZAWA MOUNTAINS.
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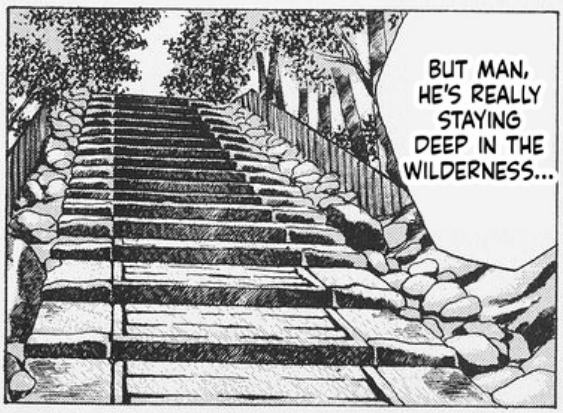
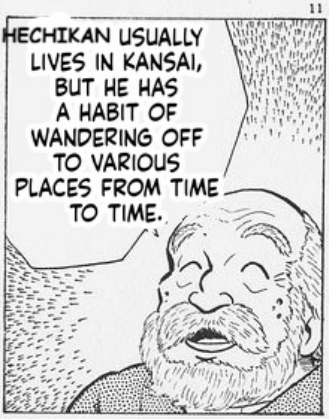
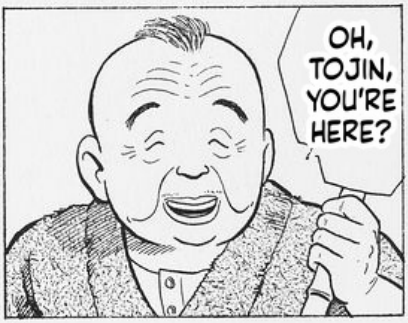
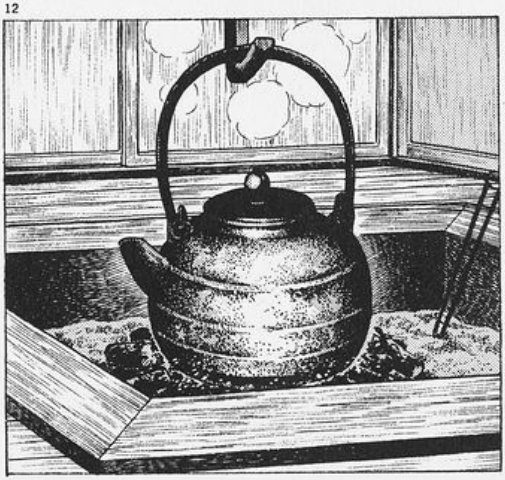

BUT MAN, HE'S REALLY STAYING DEEP IN THE WILDERNESS...


HECHIKAN USUALLY LIVES IN KANSAI, BUT HE HAS A HABIT OF WANDERING OFF TO VARIOUS PLACES FROM TIME TO TIME.

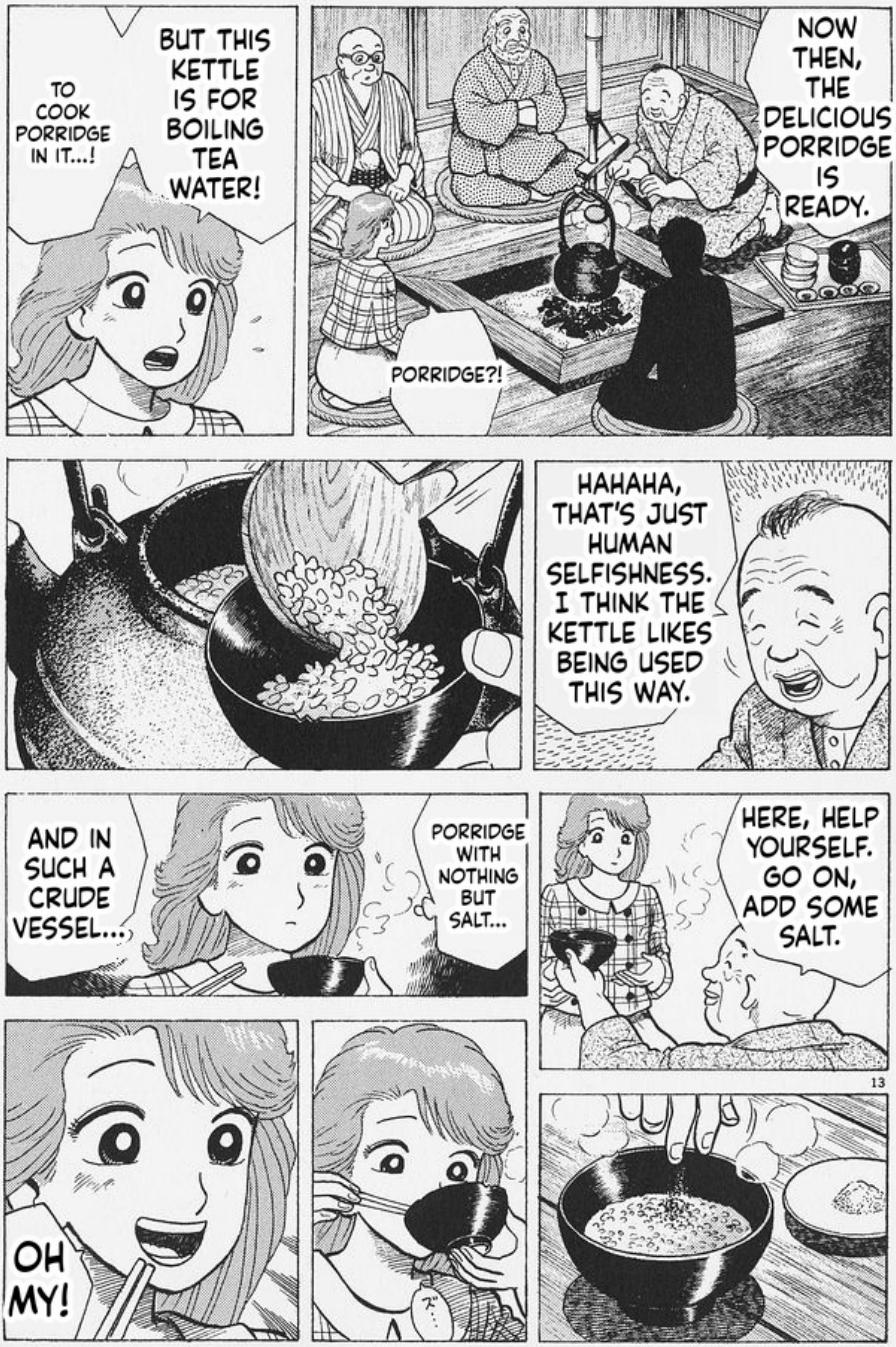

OH, TOJIN, YOU'RE HERE?

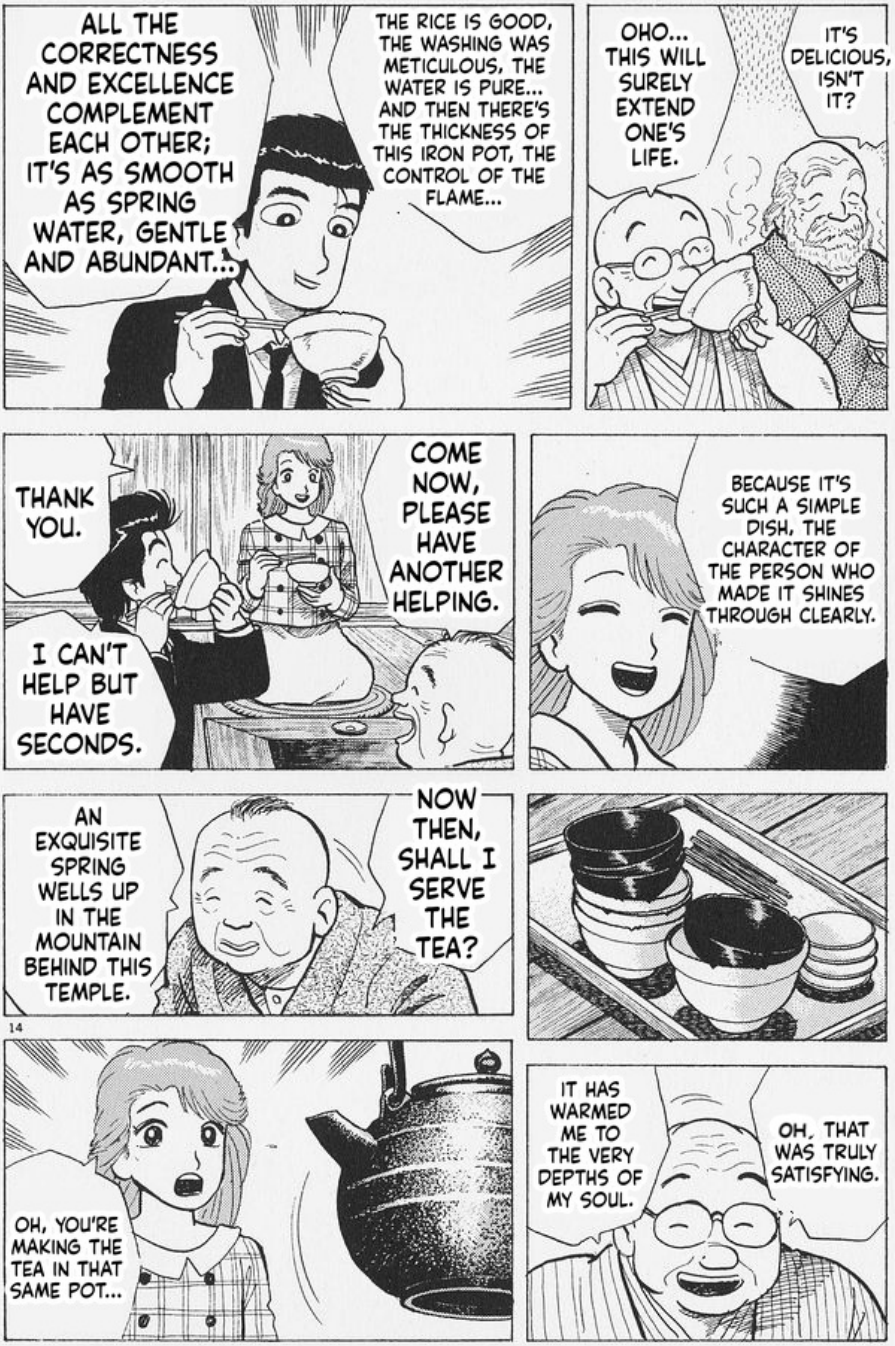
HEY, HECHIKAN!

12

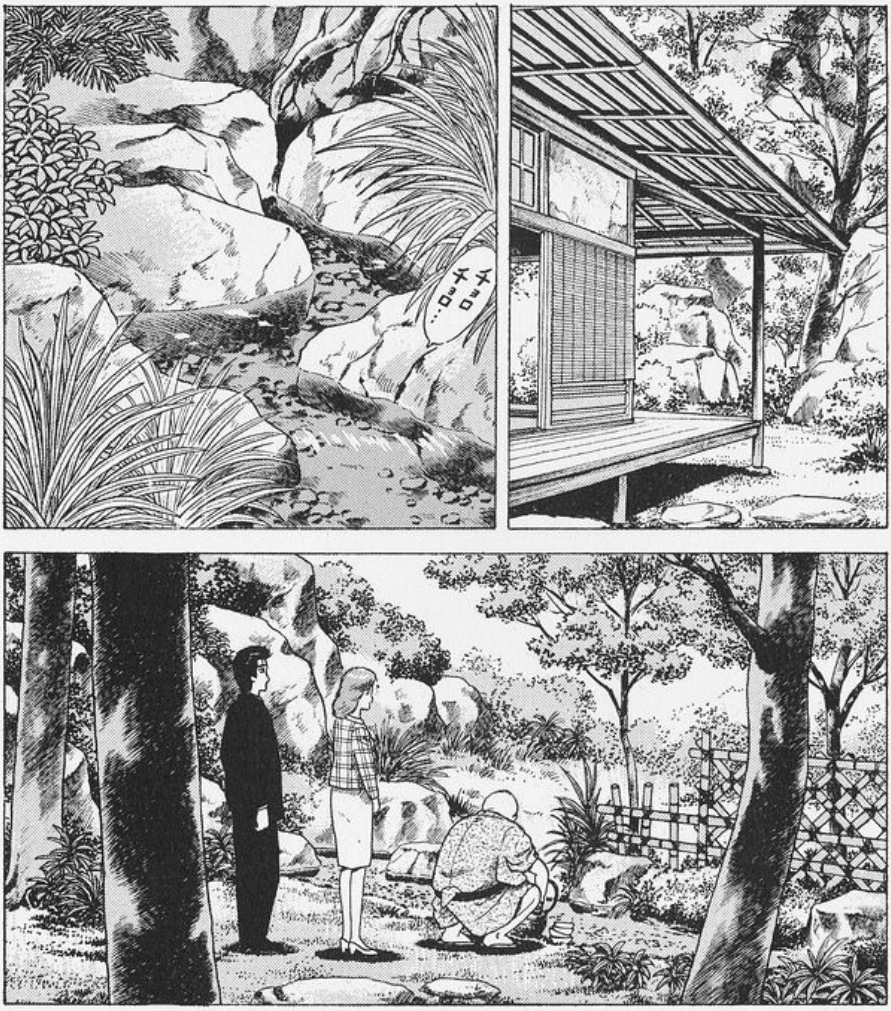


THANK YOU FOR THE OTHER DAY.
HEY, YOUNG MAN FROM THE OTHER DAY. GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT. COME ON IN.
THANKS.


BUT THIS KETTLE IS FOR BOILING TEA WATER!
TO COOK PORRIDGE IN IT...!
NOW THEN, THE DELICIOUS PORRIDGE IS READY.
PORRIDGE?!
HAHAHA, THAT'S JUST HUMAN SELFISHNESS. I THINK THE KETTLE LIKES BEING USED THIS WAY.
AND IN SUCH A CRUDE VESSEL...
PORRIDGE WITH NOTHING BUT SALT...
HERE, HELP YOURSELF. GO ON, ADD SOME SALT.
OH MY!
13


ALL THE CORRECTNESS AND EXCELLENCE COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER; IT'S AS SMOOTH AS SPRING WATER, GENTLE AND ABUNDANT...
THE RICE IS GOOD, THE WASHING WAS METICULOUS, THE WATER IS PURE... AND THEN THERE'S THE THICKNESS OF THIS IRON POT, THE CONTROL OF THE FLAME...
OHO... THIS WILL SURELY EXTEND ONE'S LIFE.
IT'S DELICIOUS, ISN'T IT?
THANK YOU.
I CAN'T HELP BUT HAVE SECONDS.
COME NOW, PLEASE HAVE ANOTHER HELPING.
BECAUSE IT'S SUCH A SIMPLE DISH, THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSON WHO MADE IT SHINES THROUGH CLEARLY.
AN EXQUISITE SPRING WELLS UP IN THE MOUNTAIN BEHIND THIS TEMPLE.
NOW THEN, SHALL I SERVE THE TEA?
OH, YOU'RE MAKING THE TEA IN THAT SAME POT...
IT HAS WARMED ME TO THE VERY DEPTHS OF MY SOUL.
OH, THAT WAS TRULY SATISFYING.

14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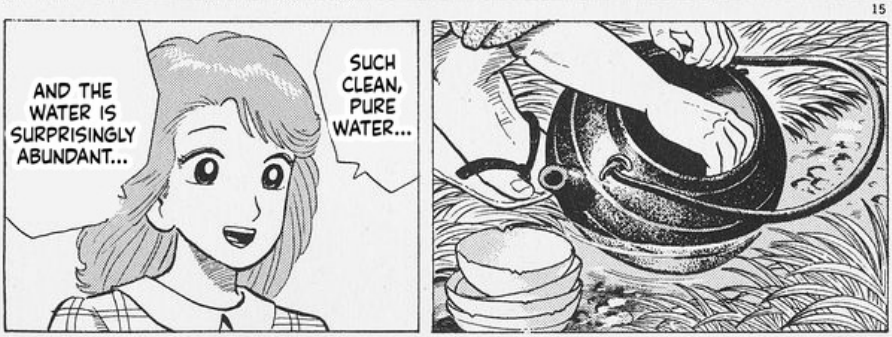
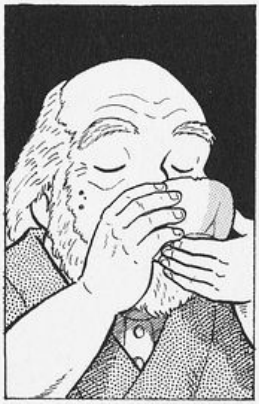
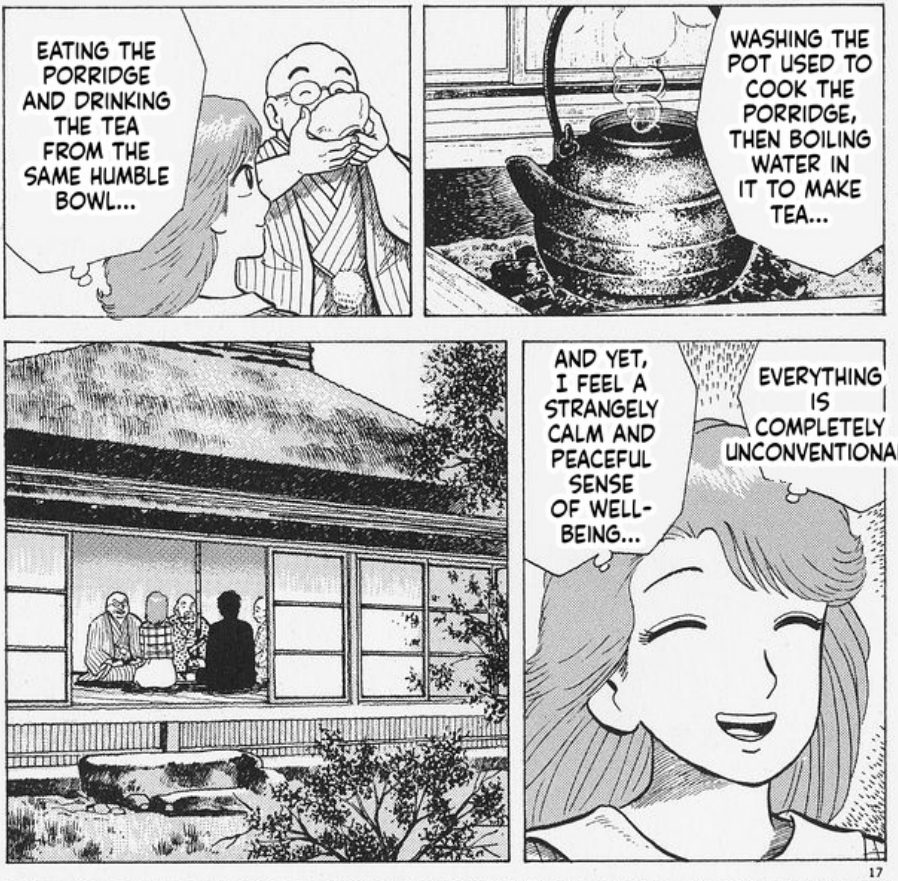
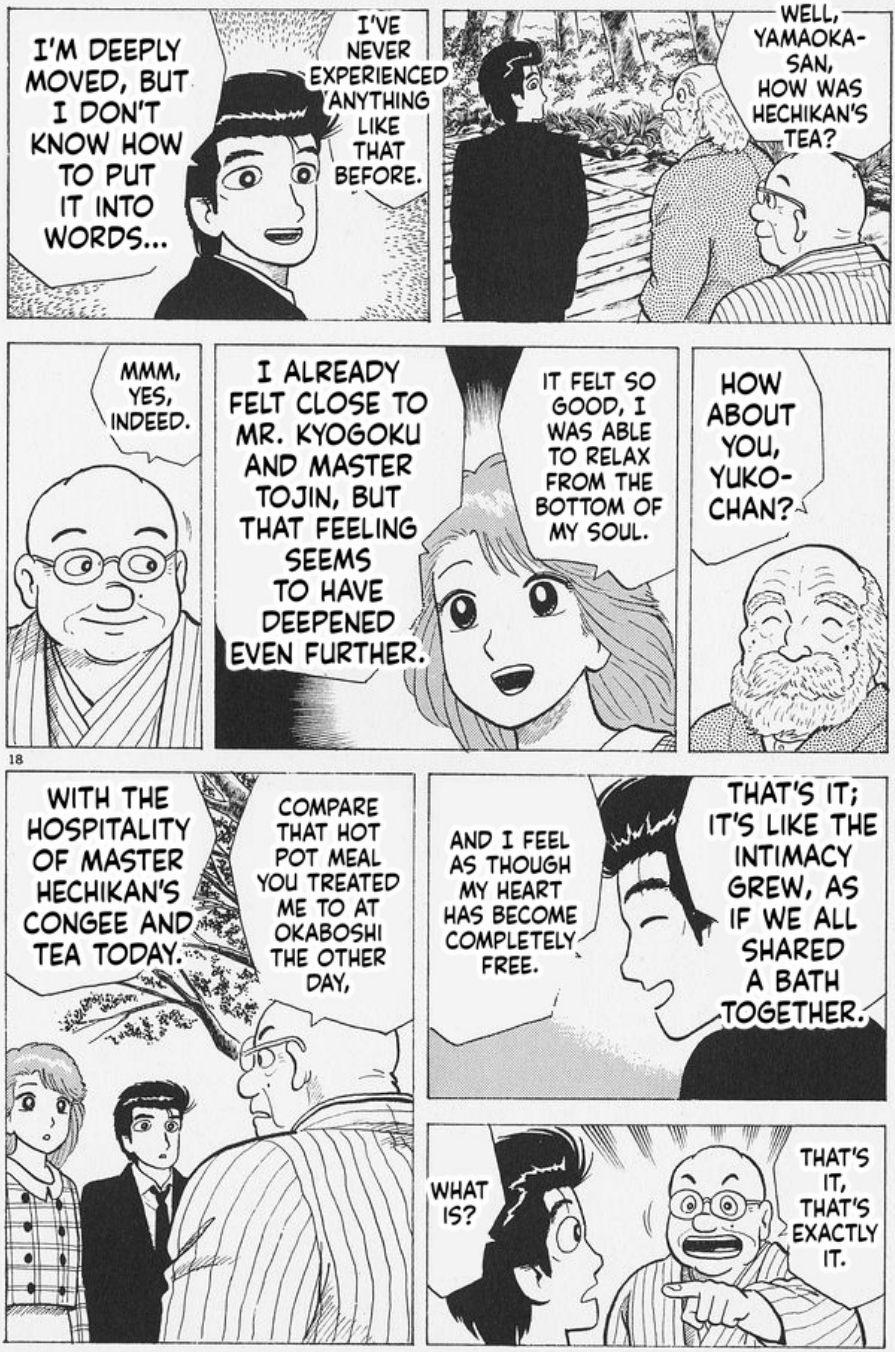
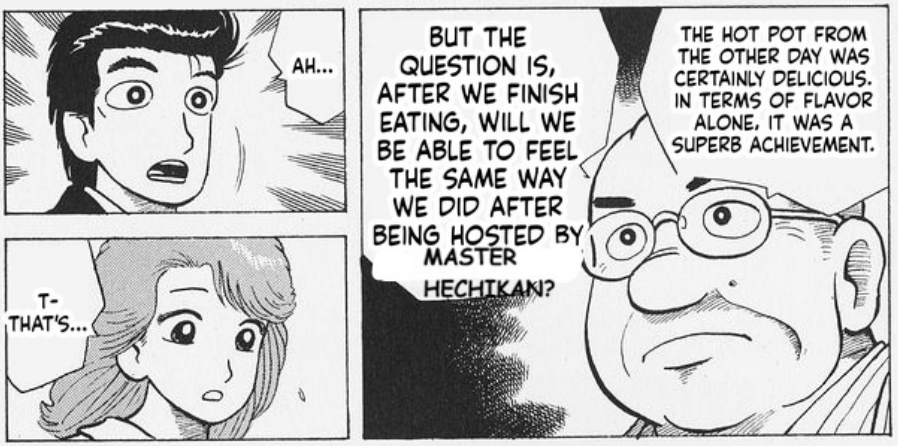

AND THE WATER IS SURPRISINGLY ABUNDANT...
SUCH CLEAN, PURE WATER...

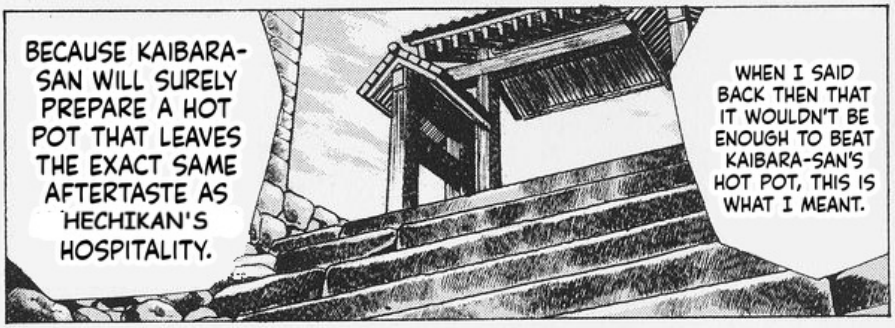
16



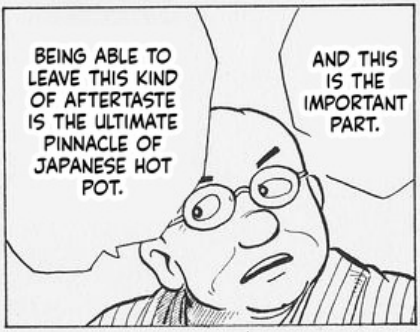

EATING THE PORRIDGE AND DRINKING THE TEA FROM THE SAME HUMBLE BOWL...
WASHING THE POT USED TO COOK THE PORRIDGE, THEN BOILING WATER IN IT TO MAKE TEA...
EVERYTHING IS COMPLETELY UNCONVENTIONAL,
AND YET, I FEEL A STRANGELY CALM AND PEACEFUL SENSE OF WELL-BEING...
17


I'M DEEPLY MOVED, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PUT IT INTO WORDS...
I'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED ANYTHING LIKE THAT BEFORE.
WELL, YAMAOKA-SAN, HOW WAS HECHIKAN'S TEA?
MMM, YES, INDEED.
I ALREADY FELT CLOSE TO MR. KYOGOKU AND MASTER TOJIN, BUT THAT FEELING SEEMS TO HAVE DEEPENED EVEN FURTHER.
IT FELT SO GOOD, I WAS ABLE TO RELAX FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY SOUL.
HOW ABOUT YOU, YUKO-CHAN?
18
WITH THE HOSPITALITY OF MASTER HECHIKAN'S CONGEE AND TEA TODAY.
COMPARE THAT HOT POT MEAL YOU TREATED ME TO AT OKABOSHI THE OTHER DAY,
AND I FEEL AS THOUGH MY HEART HAS BECOME COMPLETELY FREE.
THAT'S IT; IT'S LIKE THE INTIMACY GREW, AS IF WE ALL SHARED A BATH TOGETHER.
WHAT IS?
THAT'S IT, THAT'S EXACTLY IT.


AH...
T-THAT'S...
BUT THE QUESTION IS, AFTER WE FINISH EATING, WILL WE BE ABLE TO FEEL THE SAME WAY WE DID AFTER BEING HOSTED BY MASTER HECHIKAN?
THE HOT POT FROM THE OTHER DAY WAS CERTAINLY DELICIOUS. IN TERMS OF FLAVOR ALONE, IT WAS A SUPERB ACHIEVEMENT.

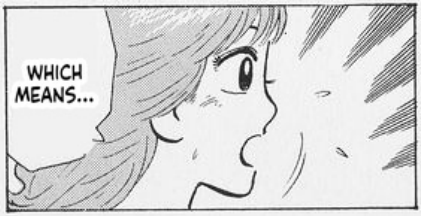

BECAUSE KAIBARA-SAN WILL SURELY PREPARE A HOT POT THAT LEAVES THE EXACT SAME AFTERTASTE AS HECHIKAN'S HOSPITALITY.
WHEN I SAID BACK THEN THAT IT WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH TO BEAT KAIBARA-SAN'S HOT POT, THIS IS WHAT I MEANT.

SIGH...
YOU'LL HAVE TO FIGURE OUT THE REST FOR YOURSELVES.

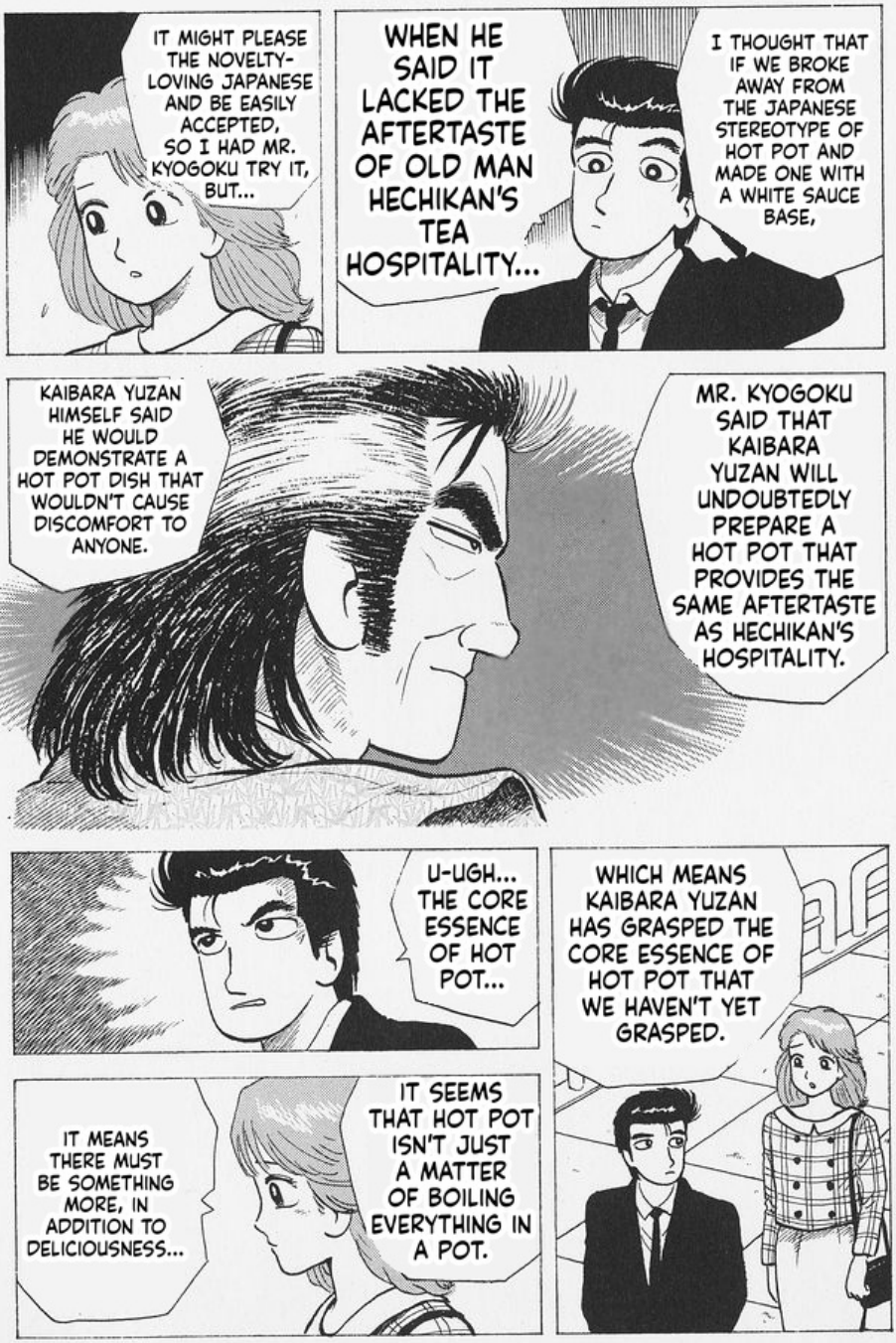

BEING ABLE TO LEAVE THIS KIND OF AFTERTASTE IS THE ULTIMATE PINNACLE OF JAPANESE HOT POT.
AND THIS IS THE IMPORTANT PART.

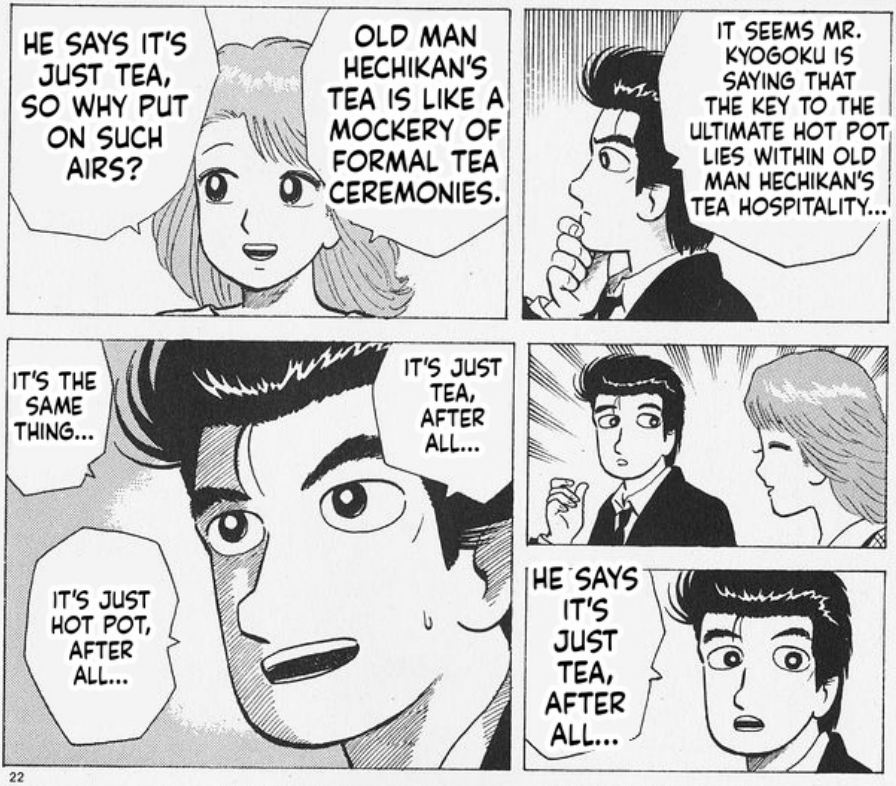
.....

19

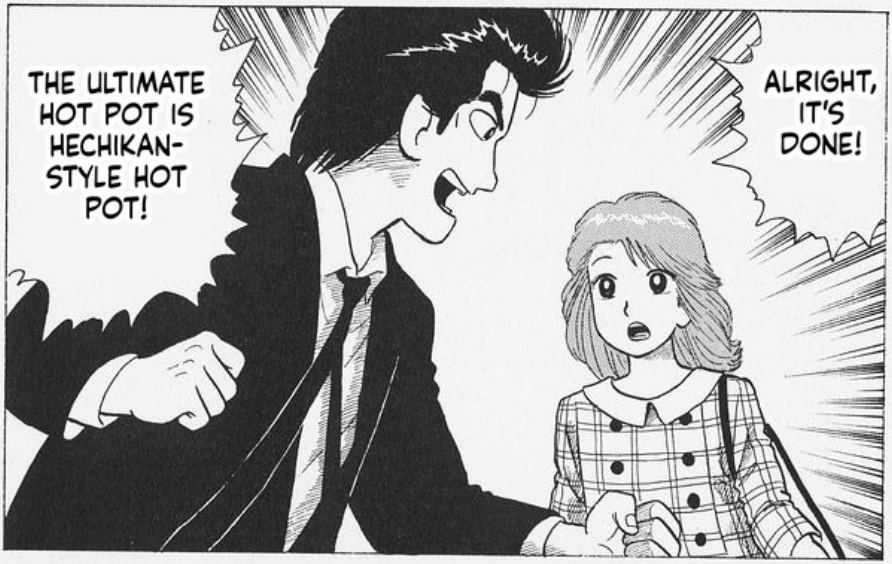

WHICH MEANS...

I'D LIKE TO PUNCH THAT OLD MAN AND TURN HIM INTO GEEZER STEW...
DAMN IT...
IF YOU DON'T SERVE ME A DELICIOUS HOT POT, THERE WILL BE HELL TO PAY.
SHIRO! I WENT OUT OF MY WAY TO BRING YOU HERE TO HECHIKAN'S PLACE.
WHY, YOU...!
THAT'S WHY, IF YOU PRESENT SOMETHING AS THE 'ULTIMATE HOT POT,' IT WILL ONLY BUY YOU THE RESENTMENT AND HOSTILITY OF THE MASSES.
HOT POT IS THE SPIRITUAL HOME OF THE JAPANESE PEOPLE. THERE ARE REGIONAL SPECIALTIES ROOTED IN LOCAL CULTURE, AND RECIPES CHERISHED BY EVERY HOUSEHOLD.
20
WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM, HAVE WE?
MA ZAKAYA

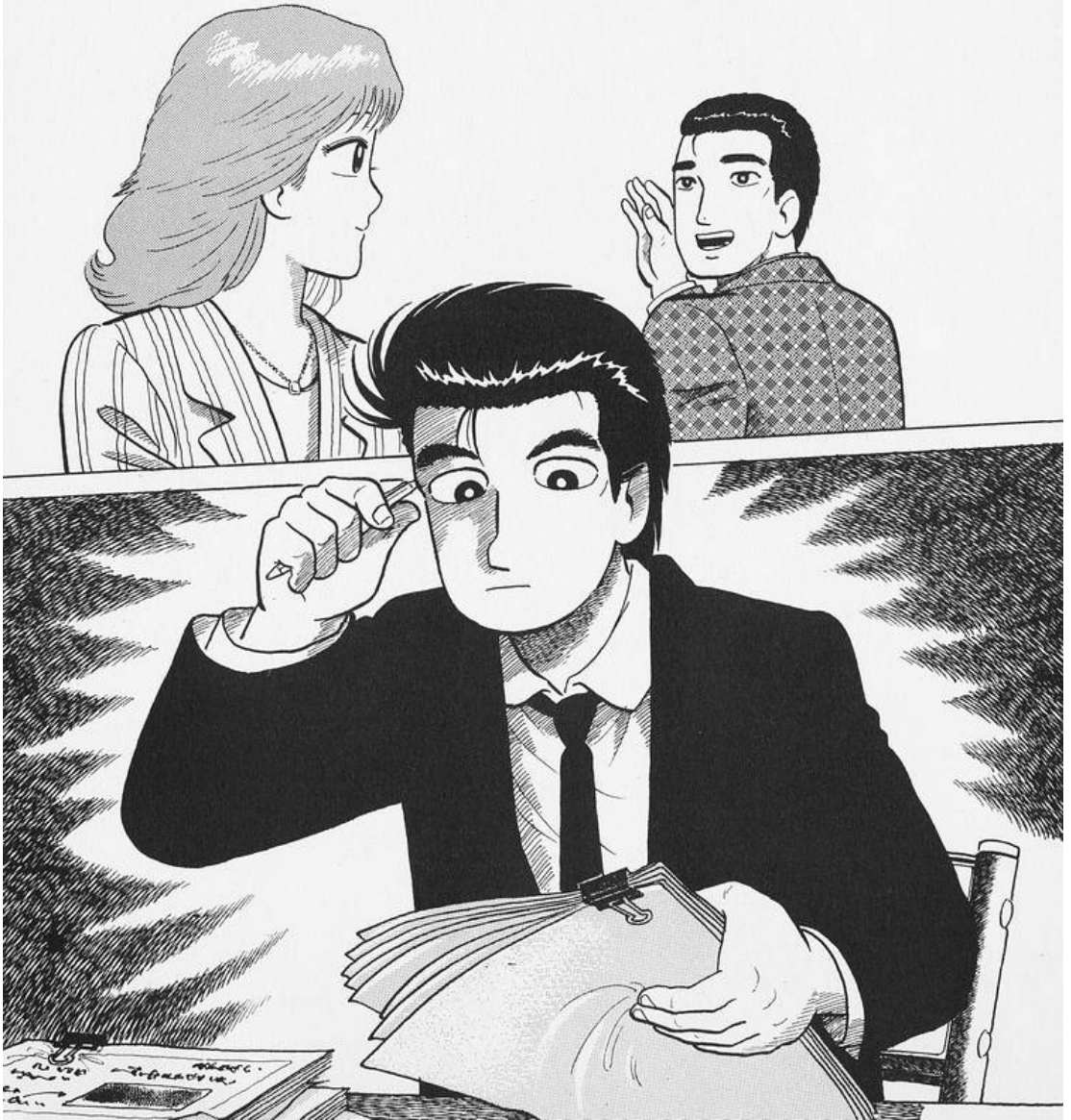

IT MIGHT PLEASE THE NOVELTY-LOVING JAPANESE AND BE EASILY ACCEPTED, SO I HAD MR. KYOGOKU TRY IT, BUT...
WHEN HE SAID IT LACKED THE AFTERTASTE OF OLD MAN HECHIKAN'S TEA HOSPITALITY...
I THOUGHT THAT IF WE BROKE AWAY FROM THE JAPANESE STEREOTYPE OF HOT POT AND MADE ONE WITH A WHITE SAUCE BASE,
KAIBARA YUZAN HIMSELF SAID HE WOULD DEMONSTRATE A HOT POT DISH THAT WOULDN'T CAUSE DISCOMFORT TO ANYONE.
MR. KYOGOKU SAID THAT KAIBARA YUZAN WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PREPARE A HOT POT THAT PROVIDES THE SAME AFTERTASTE AS HECHIKAN'S HOSPITALITY.
U-UGH... THE CORE ESSENCE OF HOT POT...
WHICH MEANS KAIBARA YUZAN HAS GRASPED THE CORE ESSENCE OF HOT POT THAT WE HAVEN'T YET GRASPED.
IT SEEMS THAT HOT POT ISN'T JUST A MATTER OF BOILING EVERYTHING IN A POT.
IT MEANS THERE MUST BE SOMETHING MORE, IN ADDITION TO DELICIOUSNESS...
21

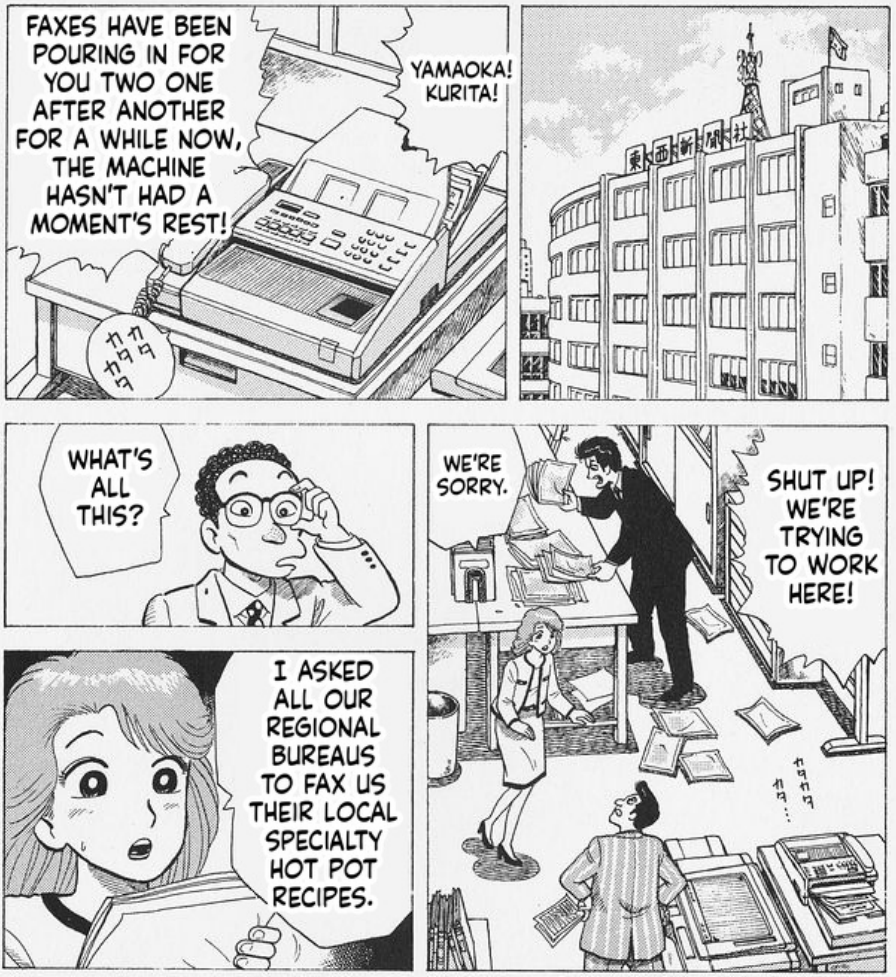

HE SAYS IT'S JUST TEA, SO WHY PUT ON SUCH AIRS?
OLD MAN HECHIKAN'S TEA IS LIKE A MOCKERY OF FORMAL TEA CEREMONIES.
IT SEEMS MR. KYOGOKU IS SAYING THAT THE KEY TO THE ULTIMATE HOT POT LIES WITHIN OLD MAN HECHIKAN'S TEA HOSPITALITY...
IT'S THE SAME THING...
IT'S JUST TEA, AFTER ALL...
IT'S JUST HOT POT, AFTER ALL...
HE SAYS IT'S JUST TEA, AFTER ALL...

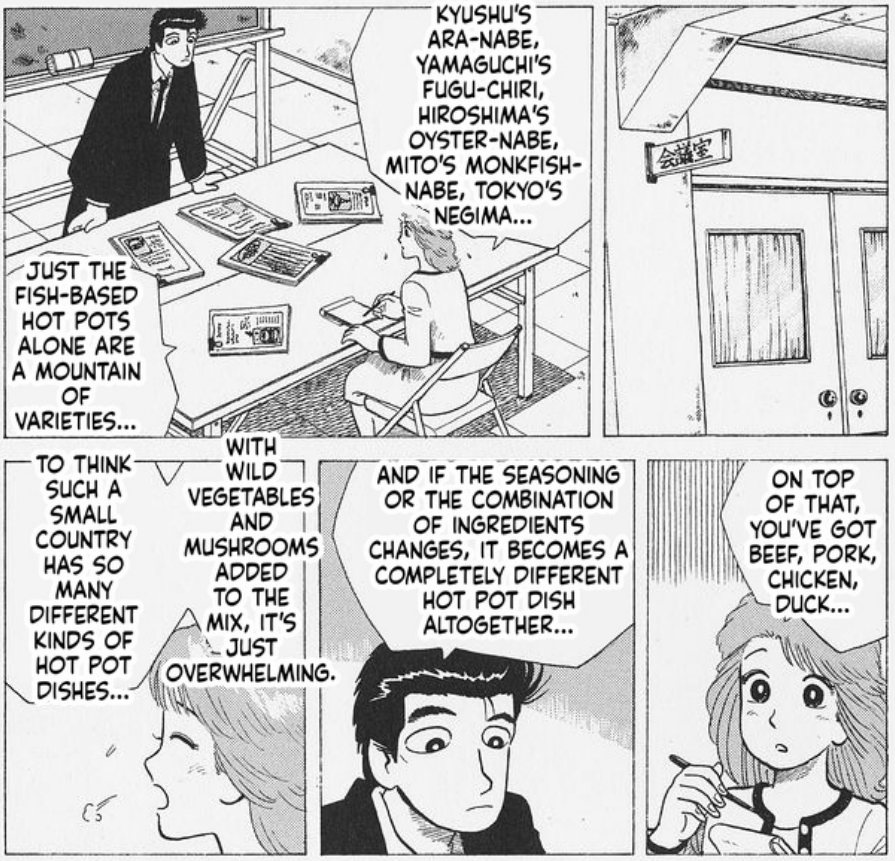
22


THE ULTIMATE HOT POT IS HECHIKAN-STYLE HOT POT!
ALRIGHT, IT'S DONE!

第5話
究極VS至高鍋対決!!〈3〉




FAXES HAVE BEEN POURING IN FOR YOU TWO ONE AFTER ANOTHER FOR A WHILE NOW, THE MACHINE HASN'T HAD A MOMENT'S REST!
YAMAOKA! KURITA!
WHAT'S ALL THIS?
I ASKED ALL OUR REGIONAL BUREAUS TO FAX US THEIR LOCAL SPECIALTY HOT POT RECIPES.
WE'RE SORRY.
SHUT UP! WE'RE TRYING TO WORK HERE!
2
WHOA... WE DEFINITELY CAN'T PUT OUT SOME HALF-BAKED HOT POT FOR THIS 'ULTIMATE MENU' SHOWDOWN.
YEAH... MY HEAD IS STARTING TO ACHE...
IT'S REALLY HIT HOME JUST HOW POPULAR HOT POT DISHES ARE.
EVERYONE GOT SO FIRED UP TRYING TO PITCH THEIR OWN REGION'S HOT POT,


KYUSHU'S ARA-NABE, YAMAGUCHI'S FUGU-CHIRI, HIROSHIMA'S OYSTER-NABE, MITO'S MONKFISH-NABE, TOKYO'S NEGIMA...
JUST THE FISH-BASED HOT POTS ALONE ARE A MOUNTAIN OF VARIETIES...
TO THINK SUCH A SMALL COUNTRY HAS SO MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF HOT POT DISHES...
WITH WILD VEGETABLES AND MUSHROOMS ADDED TO THE MIX, IT'S JUST OVERWHELMING.
AND IF THE SEASONING OR THE COMBINATION OF INGREDIENTS CHANGES, IT BECOMES A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT HOT POT DISH ALTOGETHER...
ON TOP OF THAT, YOU'VE GOT BEEF, PORK, CHICKEN, DUCK...
3
OH, EVERYONE IS HERE TOGETHER...
MR. KYOGOKU SAID HE HAD SOMETHING TO DISCUSS WITH YOU ALL, SO I BROUGHT HIM ALONG.
チャ

MY, YOU'RE MAKING MASTER HECHIKAN A SPECIAL JUDGE?
I WAS JUST THINKING HOW IT'D BE IF WE INVITED HIM AS A SPECIAL JUDGE.
ACTUALLY, WHEN I TOLD OLD MAN HECHIKAN ABOUT THIS HOT POT BUSINESS, HE SAID HE ABSOLUTELY LOVES HOT POT.
BUT IS THERE EVEN TIME FOR THAT NOW?
I HEAR YOU'RE GATHERING AND ANALYZING HOT POT DATA FROM EVERY LOCAL BUREAU...
SINCE WE'RE WELCOMING THAT GENTLEMAN AS A SPECIAL JUDGE, HALF-BAKED COOKING SIMPLY WON'T CUT IT.
OLD MAN HECHIKAN IS A TEA MASTER KNOWN TO THOSE IN THE KNOW.
4
EXACTLY. NOW, HURRY UP AND GO HOME, GO HOME!
WHAT?! ARE YOU SAYING WE'RE THE INTERFERENCE?!
IT'LL BE FINE PROVIDED THERE'S NO UNNECESSARY INTERFERENCE TO DAMPEN OUR MOTIVATION.
AREN'T YOU RUNNING QUITE BEHIND SCHEDULE?

...I SUDDENLY STARTED FEELING A BIT UNEASY...
会議室
WA... WAIT, YAMAOKA-KUN, I CAME HERE BECAUSE I HAVE SOMETHING TO DISCUSS.
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF I EXPLAINED THE SPIRIT OF THE OLD MAN'S HOSPITALITY TO YOU BOTH A BIT MORE...
HMM... THIS MIGHT BE REDUNDANT, BUT,
GOOD REFERENCE, BUT I HOPE YOU AND YUKO-KUN DIDN'T MISUNDERSTAND ANYTHING...
I TOOK YOU TWO TO SEE OLD HECHIKAN THINKING IT WOULD BE A
MISUNDERSTAND?
THANK YOU. BUT WE BELIEVE WE UNDERSTOOD IT PERFECTLY.
5
.....
WELL THEN, THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...
I-I SEE...
I BELIEVE I'VE GRASPED THE GUIDELINES FOR CREATING THE ULTIMATE HOT POT DISH FROM THE WAY MASTER HECHIKAN SERVES TEA.

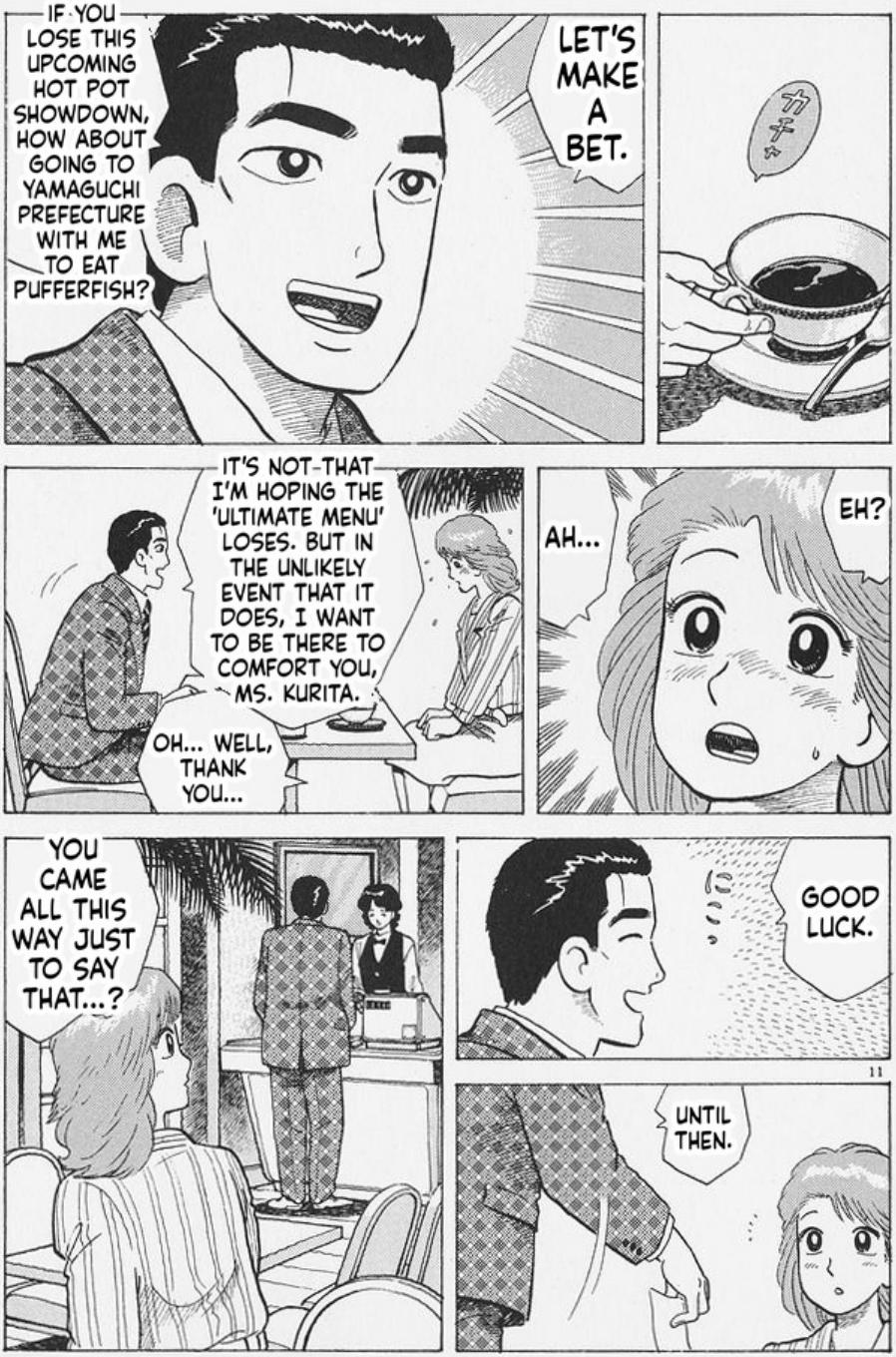
I'D LIKE TO BORROW YOUR EXPERTISE, MR. NISHI, TO HELP ME FINALIZE MY IDEAS FOR THE ULTIMATE HOT POT DISH.
HO HO, SO IT'S A HOT POT SHOWDOWN, IS IT...?
I'M SURE YOU MUST KNOW ALL SORTS OF SECRETS REGARDING HOT POT CUISINE.
SINCE YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CREATED THAT TRANSCENDENT MATSUTAKE AND PIKE CONGER HOT POT...
6
CRAB HOT POT?
MR. YAMAOKA, YOU HAVEN'T TRIED MY CRAB HOT POT YET, HAVE YOU?
WHILE THOSE THREE DISHES ARE CERTAINLY DELICIOUS,
FUGU-CHIRI, SOFT-SHELL TURTLE, AND THE MATSUTAKE AND PIKE CONGER. THOSE ARE THE BIG THREE OF HOT POT.
THOSE WERE TRULY INCREDIBLE...

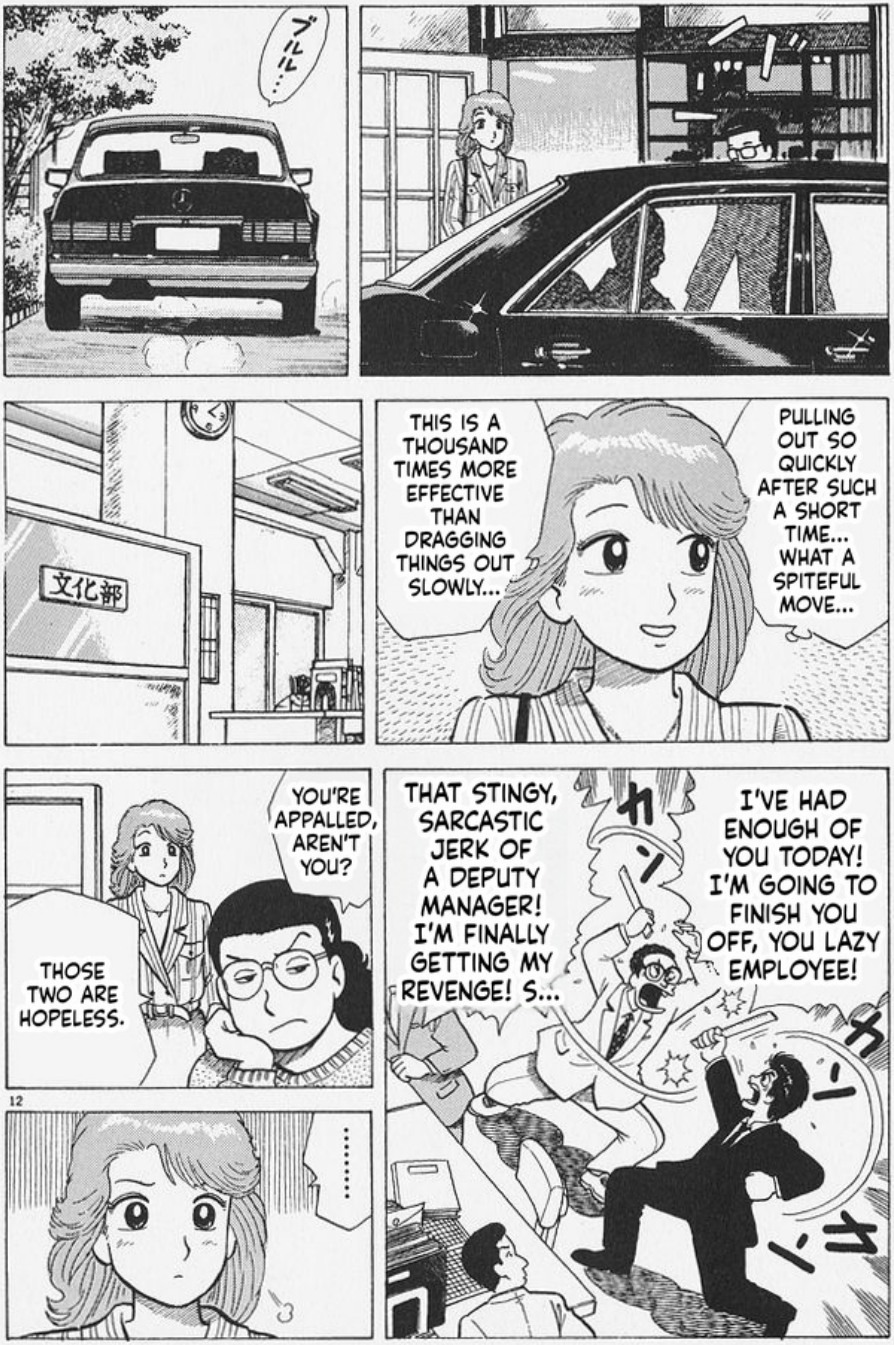
WHAT KIND OF CRAB IS IT?
FROM THE WAY YOU'RE TALKING, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE SAYING IT'S WRONG TO TALK ABOUT THE 'THREE GREAT HOT POTS' WITHOUT EATING NISHI-SAN'S CRAB POT...
EXACTLY.
IT'S MATSUBA CRAB.
VERY WELL, LET'S START MAKING IT RIGHT AWAY.
7
I WANT A HOT POT DISH THAT IS UNADORNED, SIMPLE, AND COMMON, YET FULL OF HEART...
FOR THIS UPCOMING HOT POT COMPETITION, WE WANT TO PREPARE A DISH THAT FEELS LIKE THE SPIRITUAL HOME OF ALL JAPANESE PEOPLE.
W-WAIT!
EH, WHY?
NOT TO MENTION, MATSUBA CRAB IS FAR TOO HIGH-END...
THAT'S WHY I DON'T WANT TO USE EXPENSIVE, HIGH-END INGREDIENTS LIKE PUFFERFISH, SOFT-SHELL TURTLE, OR MATSUTAKE MUSHROOMS.

WE WANT TO BORROW YOUR WISDOM FOR A HOT POT DISH THAT CAN BE MADE WITH INGREDIENTS EASILY OBTAINED BY ANYONE.
IF WE PRESENT SOMETHING LIKE MATSUBA CRAB AND CLAIM IT'S THE 'ULTIMATE' HOT POT, WOULDN'T THAT OFFEND PEOPLE WHO HAVE A STRONG ATTACHMENT TO THE LOCAL OR HOME-COOKED HOT POTS OF THEIR OWN REGIONS?
HMM...
IF THAT IS HOW YOU BOTH FEEL, THEN IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
I SHALL TEACH THE CRAB HOT POT TO SOMEONE ELSE.
I'M SORRY, AFTER YOU WERE KIND ENOUGH TO OFFER...
OH...
TEACHING IT TO SOMEONE ELSE... THAT'S...
8
IN THAT CASE, HOW ABOUT A CHICKEN HOT POT USING COMMON INGREDIENTS? SHALL I TEACH YOU THE SECRET TO USING CHICKEN IN A HOT POT?
AH, YES, PLEASE DO.

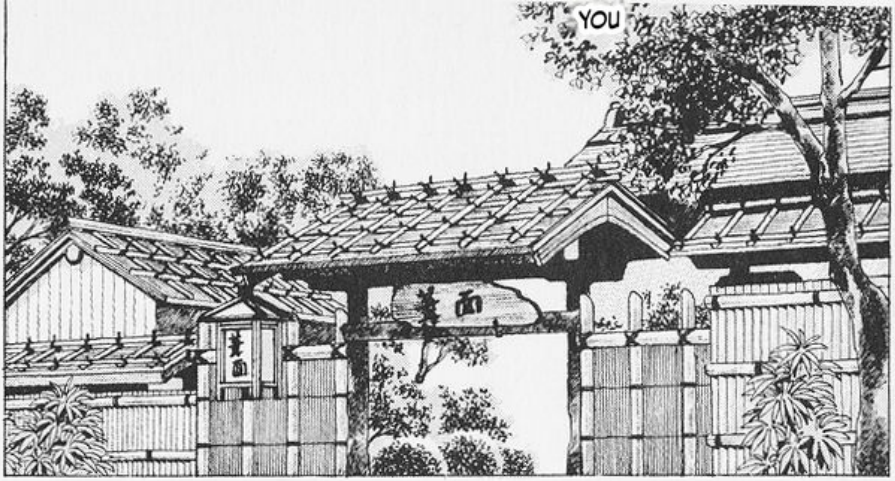
MAKE SURE WE DON'T END UP EMBARRASSED IN FRONT OF THOSE TEITO NEWSPAPER PEOPLE AGAIN~
YAMAOKA-KUN, I ASSUME THE HOT POT DISH IS COMING ALONG WELL.
OH, IS THAT SO? IS THAT SO?
I FEEL LIKE A GOOD IDEA MIGHT COME TOGETHER IF I EAT SOME PUFFERFISH STEW.
GIVE ME SOME FUNDS.
HMM? WHAT'S THIS?
BUY IT ON YOUR OWN, THEN!
THIS IS FOR WORK, YOU JACKASS!
KEEP THE CHANGE.
WELL, GO AHEAD AND EAT ALL THE PUFFERFISH STEW OR WHATEVER ELSE YOU WANT WITH THIS.
9
AHHH... HONESTLY...
YOU IDIOT! EVEN TEN YEN IS TOO MUCH FOR A PAYROLL THIEF WHO DOESN'T DO A LICK OF WORK!
CHEAPSKATE! IS THIS HOW YOU TREAT A SUBORDINATE WHO'S WORKING HIS TAIL OFF?!

EH?!?
IT'S PRESIDENT DAN.
KURITA-SAN, THERE'S A VISITOR FOR YOU IN THE FIRST-FLOOR LOBBY.
OH, FOR ME?
CAFE LEMON
THERE'S JUST NO COMPARING PRESIDENT DAN TO THAT LAZY BUM.
KURITA-SAN...
EH... AH...
I'M SORRY FOR CALLING YOU AWAY IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR WORK.
NO, NOT AT ALL.
I HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR WHAT THIS ULTIMATE HOT POT DISH WILL BE.
YES.


IF YOU LOSE THIS UPCOMING HOT POT SHOWDOWN, HOW ABOUT GOING TO YAMAGUCHI PREFECTURE WITH ME TO EAT PUFFERFISH?
LET'S MAKE A BET.
カチャ
IT'S NOT THAT I'M HOPING THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' LOSES. BUT IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT IT DOES, I WANT TO BE THERE TO COMFORT YOU, MS. KURITA.
OH... WELL, THANK YOU...
AH...
EH?
YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY JUST TO SAY THAT...?
GOOD LUCK.
UNTIL THEN.


ブルル…
文化部
THIS IS A THOUSAND TIMES MORE EFFECTIVE THAN DRAGGING THINGS OUT SLOWLY...
PULLING OUT SO QUICKLY AFTER SUCH A SHORT TIME... WHAT A SPITEFUL MOVE...
YOU'RE APPALLED, AREN'T YOU?
THOSE TWO ARE HOPELESS.
12
……
THAT STINGY, SARCASTIC JERK OF A DEPUTY MANAGER! I'M FINALLY GETTING MY REVENGE! S...
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU TODAY! I'M GOING TO FINISH YOU OFF, YOU LAZY EMPLOYEE!
カーン
カーン
カーン

AND?
YAMAGUCHI, HUH... THAT WOULD BE A TWO OR THREE-NIGHT TRIP...
HE INVITED ME TO GO TO YAMAGUCHI PREFECTURE WITH HIM TO EAT FUGU.
AND WHAT ABOUT PRESIDENT DAN...?
I'LL GO.
IF I LOSE THIS UPCOMING HOT POT COMPETITION...
ガラ
WHOA!
13
I THINK THAT'S THE RIGHT DECISION.
HMM... I SEE, SO YOU'VE FINALLY MADE UP YOUR MIND.


YOU

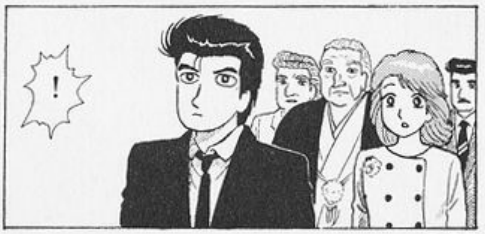
I HEAR YOU'RE SERVING AS A SPECIAL JUDGE TODAY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK.
HO HO, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, MR. KAIBARA.

WELL, WELL, IF IT ISN'T MASTER HECHIKAN.

14

WELL, I JUST HOPE SOME IDIOT'S HOT POT DISH DOESN'T END UP OFFENDING YOU, MASTER HECHIKAN.

I'M ALREADY GRINNING FROM EAR TO EAR AT THE THOUGHT OF EATING SOMETHING DELICIOUS.
NOT AT ALL, I SIMPLY HAPPEN TO LOVE HOT POT DISHES.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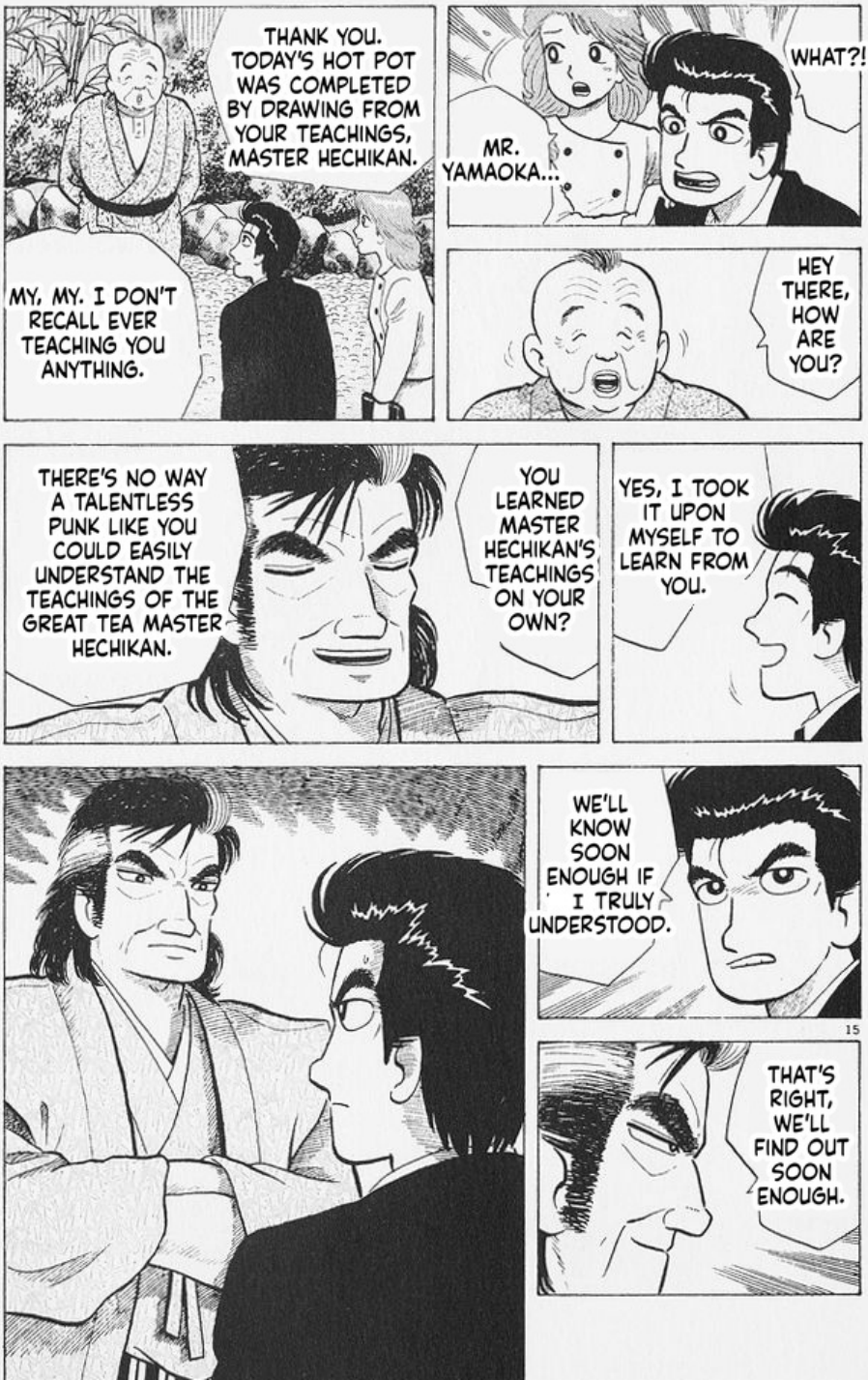
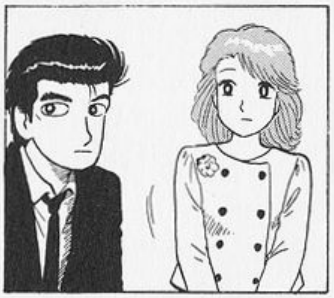

THANK YOU. TODAY'S HOT POT WAS COMPLETED BY DRAWING FROM YOUR TEACHINGS, MASTER HECHIKAN.
MY, MY. I DON'T RECALL EVER TEACHING YOU ANYTHING.
WHAT?!
MR. YAMAOKA...
HEY THERE, HOW ARE YOU?
YOU LEARNED MASTER HECHIKAN'S TEACHINGS ON YOUR OWN?
THERE'S NO WAY A TALENTLESS PUNK LIKE YOU COULD EASILY UNDERSTAND THE TEACHINGS OF THE GREAT TEA MASTER HECHIKAN.
YES, I TOOK IT UPON MYSELF TO LEARN FROM YOU.
WE'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH IF I TRULY UNDERSTOOD.
THAT'S RIGHT, WE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.

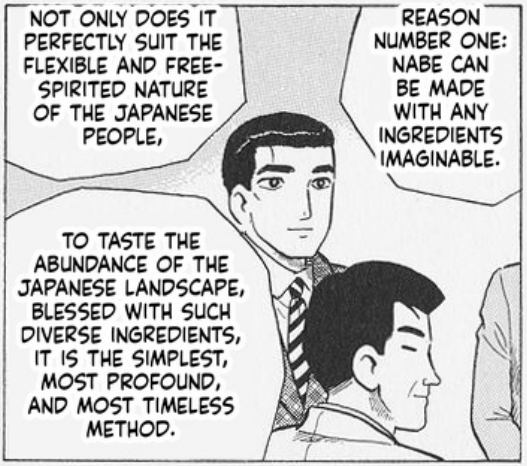
NOW THEN, LET'S START WITH THE PRESENTATION FROM THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE.

WE BEGAN OUR WORK BY FIRST DISCOVERING THE REASON WHY.
BUT AS FOR WHY NABE IS SO BELOVED BY THE JAPANESE,

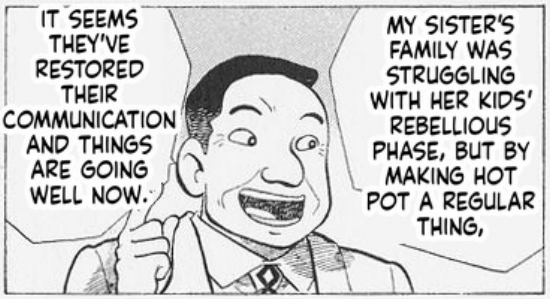


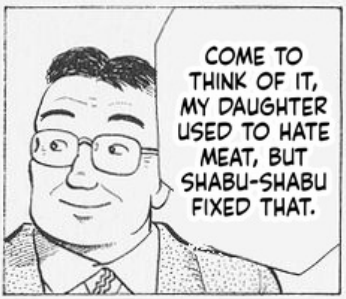
16

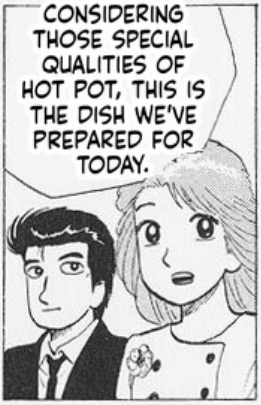
REASON NUMBER TWO: THE DEFINING FEATURE OF NABE IS A LARGE GROUP GATHERING AROUND A SINGLE POT ON THE TABLE TO EAT TOGETHER.

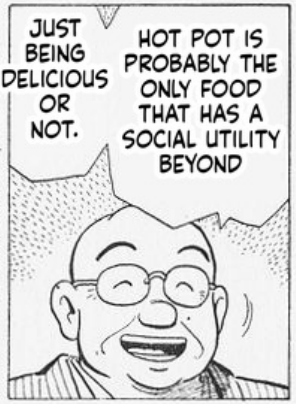

NOT ONLY DOES IT PERFECTLY SUIT THE FLEXIBLE AND FREE-SPIRITED NATURE OF THE JAPANESE PEOPLE,
REASON NUMBER ONE: NABE CAN BE MADE WITH ANY INGREDIENTS IMAGINABLE.
TO TASTE THE ABUNDANCE OF THE JAPANESE LANDSCAPE, BLESSED WITH SUCH DIVERSE INGREDIENTS, IT IS THE SIMPLEST, MOST PROFOUND, AND MOST TIMELESS METHOD.

EVEN FOR AN AMATEUR, THE JOY OF GETTING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COOKING PROCESS IS QUITE SIGNIFICANT.
REASON NUMBER THREE: AS LONG AS THE INGREDIENTS ARE PREPPED, EVERYONE CAN JUST PUT IN WHAT THEY WANT AND EAT IT WHEN THEY LIKE.
WHAT'S MORE, EVEN PEOPLE MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME CAN BECOME FAST FRIENDS ONCE THEY GATHER AROUND THE POT...
UNLIKE A STIFF, FORMAL MEAL, YOU CAN RELAX AND ENJOY YOURSELF FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART.
THERE'S NO OTHER FOOD QUITE LIKE IT.
THE FACT THAT YOU CAN ADJUST THE INGREDIENTS HOWEVER YOU LIKE MAKES IT VERY ECONOMICAL AND ENJOYABLE FOR EVERYONE.
REASON NUMBER FOUR: EVEN IF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUDDENLY INCREASES, YOU CAN JUST THROW IN WHATEVER INGREDIENTS ARE ON HAND AND IT'LL TURN OUT FINE.
17
GOSH, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, HOT POT REALLY IS A WELL-DESIGNED MEAL.
はっはは
IT SEEMS EVERY HOUSEHOLD AND EVERY INDIVIDUAL CAN FIND EVEN MORE BENEFITS TO IT.
THOSE WHO DON'T DRINK DON'T HAVE TO WAIT ON THE DRINKERS AND CAN START THEIR RICE RIGHT AWAY. SO, IT'S PERFECT FOR EVERYONE—SWEET TOOTHS, DRINKERS, THE ELDERLY, AND CHILDREN ALIKE.
REASON NUMBER FIVE: WITH HOT POT, THERE'S NO NEED TO PREPARE SEPARATE APPETIZERS FOR DRINKING. YOU CAN JUST DRINK WHILE PICKING AT THE POT.
AND TO TOP IT ALL OFF, YOU CAN MAKE PORRIDGE AT THE END. IT'S A TOTAL WIN!

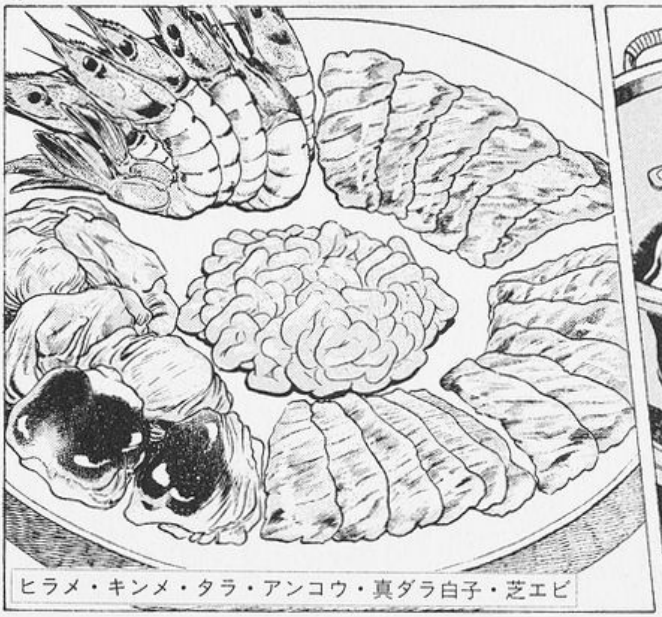

IT SEEMS THEY'VE RESTORED THEIR COMMUNICATION AND THINGS ARE GOING WELL NOW.
MY SISTER'S FAMILY WAS STRUGGLING WITH HER KIDS' REBELLIOUS PHASE, BUT BY MAKING HOT POT A REGULAR THING,


COME TO THINK OF IT, MY DAUGHTER USED TO HATE MEAT, BUT SHABU-SHABU FIXED THAT.


CONSIDERING THOSE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF HOT POT, THIS IS THE DISH WE'VE PREPARED FOR TODAY.


JUST BEING DELICIOUS OR NOT.
HOT POT IS PROBABLY THE ONLY FOOD THAT HAS A SOCIAL UTILITY BEYOND

18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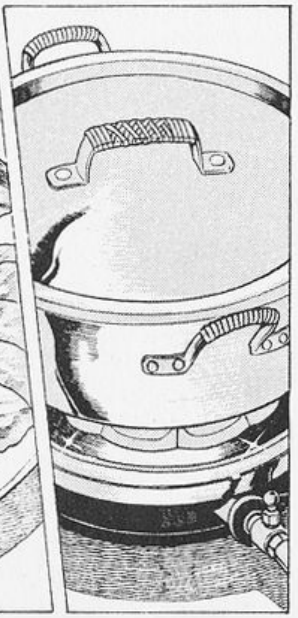
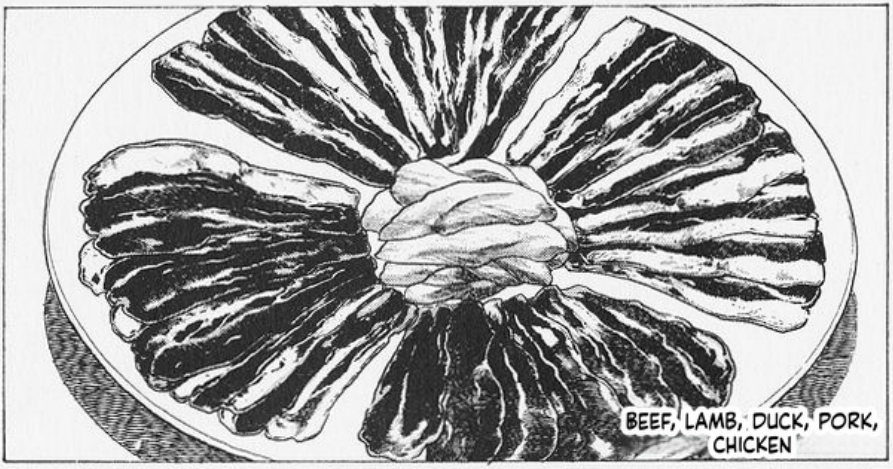
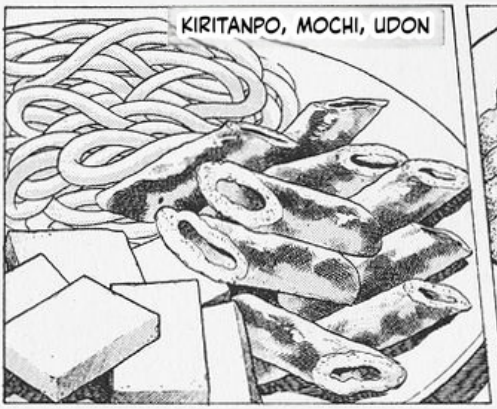
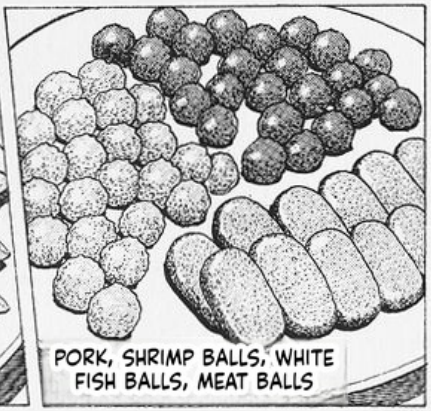



BEEF, LAMB, DUCK, PORK, CHICKEN


KIRITANPO, MOCHI, UDON


PORK, SHRIMP BALLS, WHITE FISH BALLS, MEAT BALLS

VARIOUS VEGETABLES, KONNYAKU, SHIRATAKI

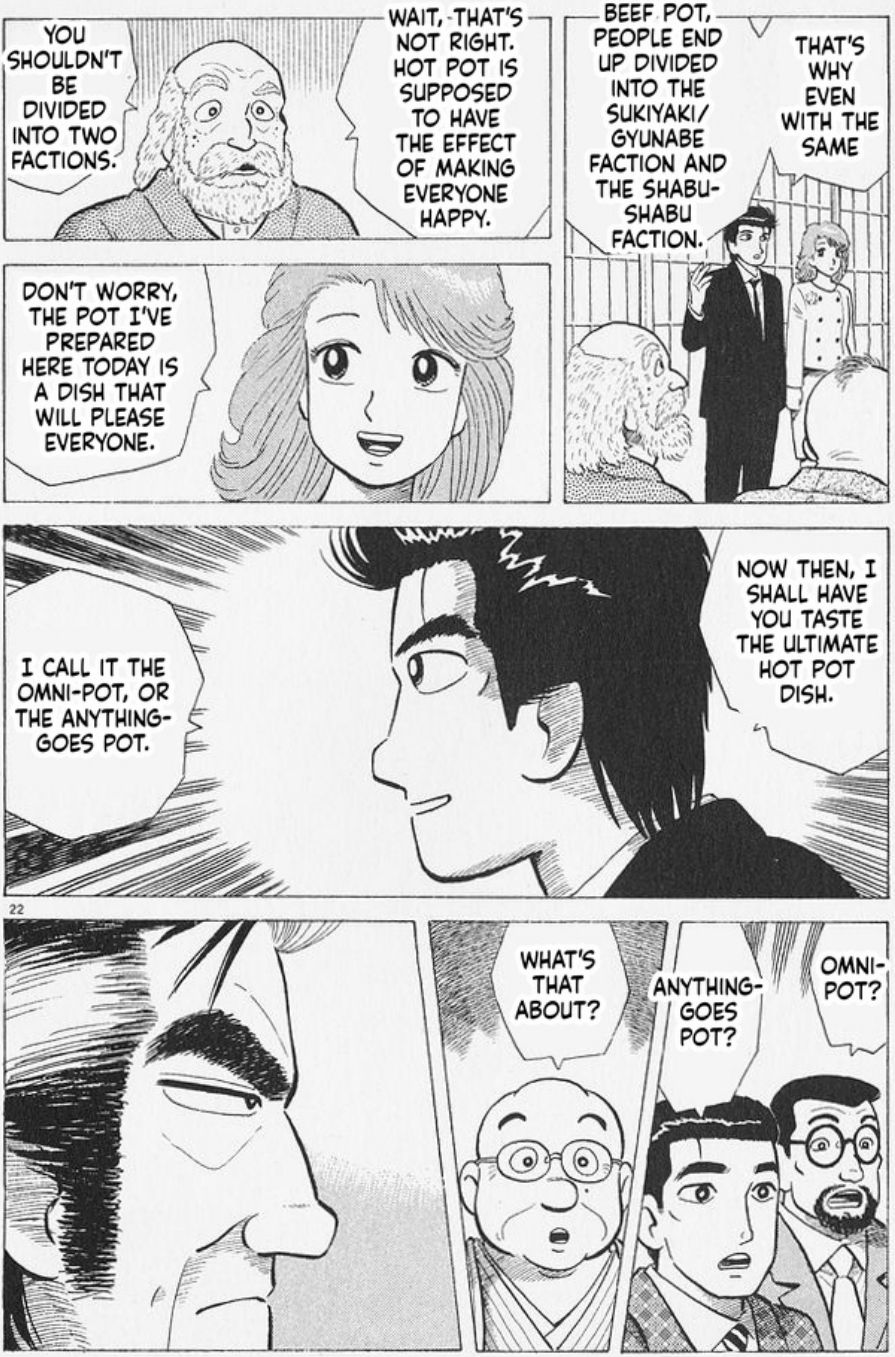
GYOZA, WONTON, SHUMAI

SOME SAY THE TRUE CHARM OF HOT POT COOKING LIES IN BOILING MANY DIFFERENT INGREDIENTS TOGETHER.
THAT'S QUITE A LOT OF ITEMS, ISN'T IT?
WHOA, THAT'S A HUGE VARIETY OF INGREDIENTS!
わっはっは
BOIL IT AND BE SURPRISED—IT'S A "DARKNESS POT"; YOU WON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF STEW YOU'VE MADE UNTIL YOU EAT IT.
EVERYONE BRINGS THEIR OWN INGREDIENTS FOR THE POT, AND ONLY THE PERSON THEMSELVES KNOWS WHAT THEY BROUGHT.
TO USE AN EXTREME EXAMPLE, IT'S WHAT PEOPLE CALL A "YAMINABE" OR A "DARKNESS POT.
THE LIGHTS ARE TURNED OFF, AND EVERYONE ADDS THE INGREDIENTS THEY BROUGHT INTO THE POT.

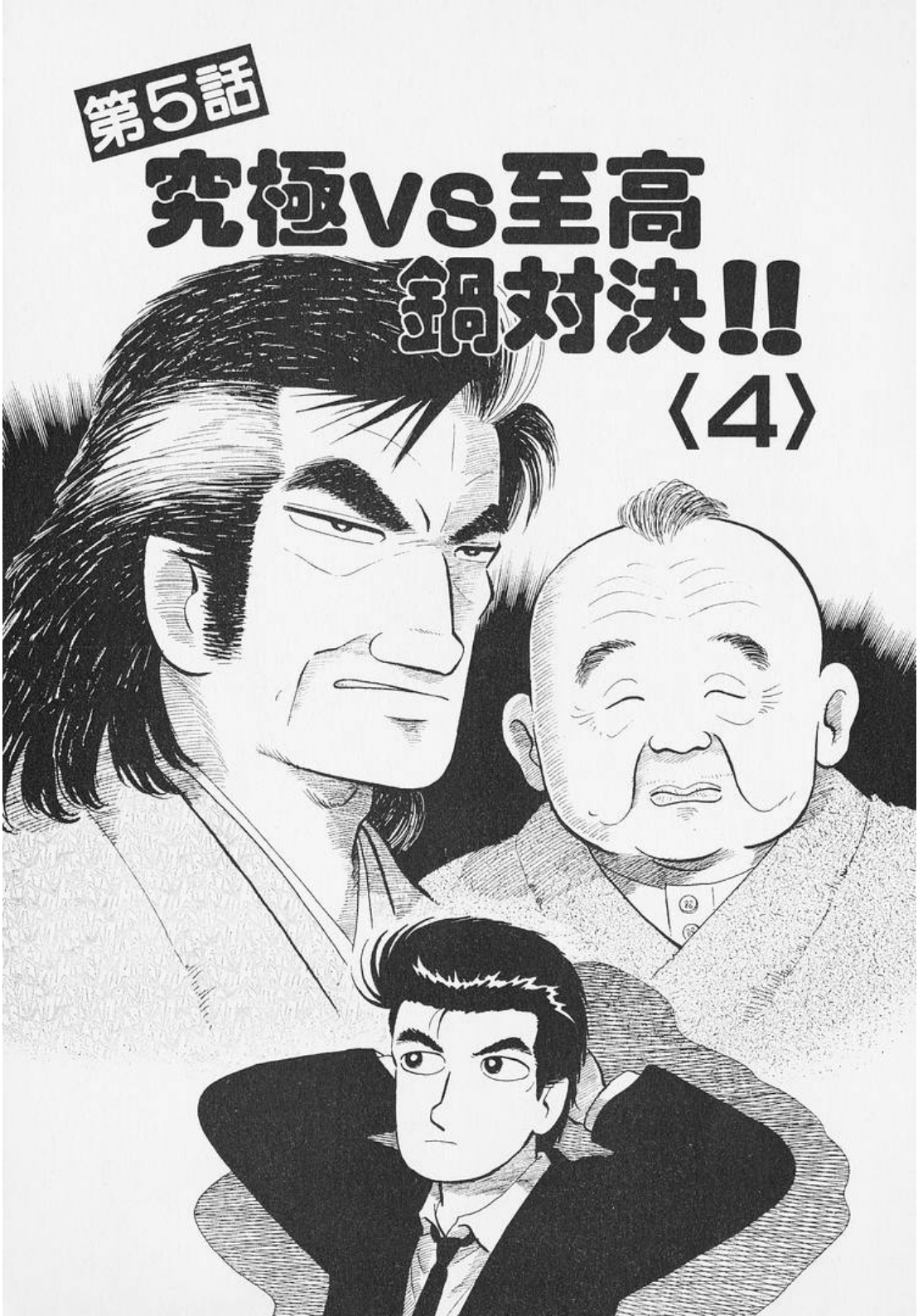
20

HOW GROSS!
おえっ
SOMETIMES THERE'S A PRANKSTER WHO PUTS IN MISO AND SWEET BEAN PASTE, RESULTING IN SOMETHING INCREDIBLY GROSS.
WELL, THIS IS A HOT POT THAT'S EIGHTY PERCENT FOR FUN, BUT IT'S STRANGE HOW IT'S STILL SOMEWHAT EDIBLE.

HEY NOW, IT'S AN INSULT TO YOSENABE TO COMPARE IT TO A DARK POT LUCK.
NOW, NOW, HE DID SAY IT WAS A MUCH MORE REFINED VERSION, SO LET'S BE LENIENT...
YOSENABE IS MADE BY BRINGING TOGETHER VARIOUS THINGS LIKE MEAT, FISH, CHICKEN, AND VEGETABLES, RIGHT?
THAT A MUCH MORE REFINED VERSION OF A DARK POT LUCK IS,
THEY SAY THE POT AND THE ABUNDANCE OF BROTH EXIST SOLELY TO DRAW OUT THE FLAVOR OF THE BEEF ITSELF, NOT TO BOIL OTHER THINGS TOGETHER WITH IT.
FOR EXAMPLE, WITH BEEF SHABU-SHABU, SWISHING THE MEAT THROUGH HOT WATER COOKS IT AND BRINGS OUT A FLAVOR DIFFERENT FROM WHEN IT'S RAW.
ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME SAY THE TRUE PLEASURE OF HOT POT ISN'T FOUND IN A JUMBLE LIKE YOSENABE.
21
I SEE... POTS THAT ARE DELICIOUS WITH JUST A SINGLE ITEM, LIKE SOFT-SHELL TURTLE OR PUFFERFISH, ARE ALL LIKE THAT.
IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY, AND NOTHING MORE...
HMM, SO THE POT AND THE WATER OR SOUP INSIDE ARE JUST TOOLS TO HEAT THE INGREDIENTS
OH, I AGREE WITH THAT OPINION.

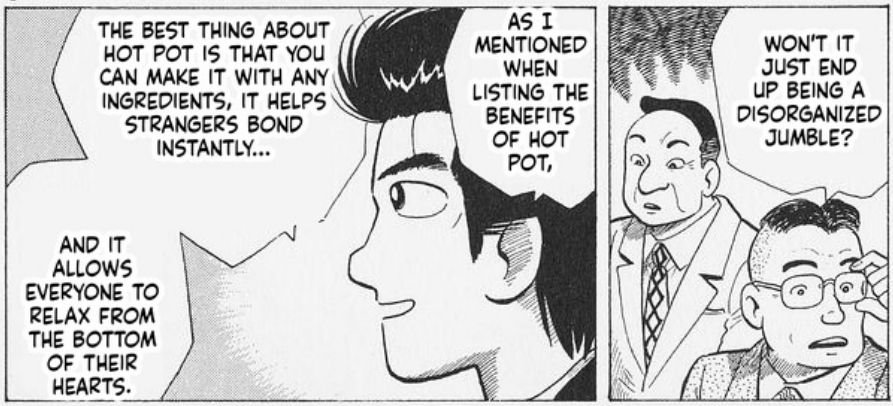

YOU SHOULDN'T BE DIVIDED INTO TWO FACTIONS.
WAIT, THAT'S NOT RIGHT. HOT POT IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE THE EFFECT OF MAKING EVERYONE HAPPY.
BEEF POT, PEOPLE END UP DIVIDED INTO THE SUKIYAKI/ GYUNABE FACTION AND THE SHABU-SHABU FACTION.
THAT'S WHY EVEN WITH THE SAME
DON'T WORRY, THE POT I'VE PREPARED HERE TODAY IS A DISH THAT WILL PLEASE EVERYONE.
I CALL IT THE OMNI-POT, OR THE ANYTHING-GOES POT.
NOW THEN, I SHALL HAVE YOU TASTE THE ULTIMATE HOT POT DISH.
22
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?
ANYTHING-GOES POT?
OMNI-POT?

第5話
究極VS至高鍋対決!!〈4〉



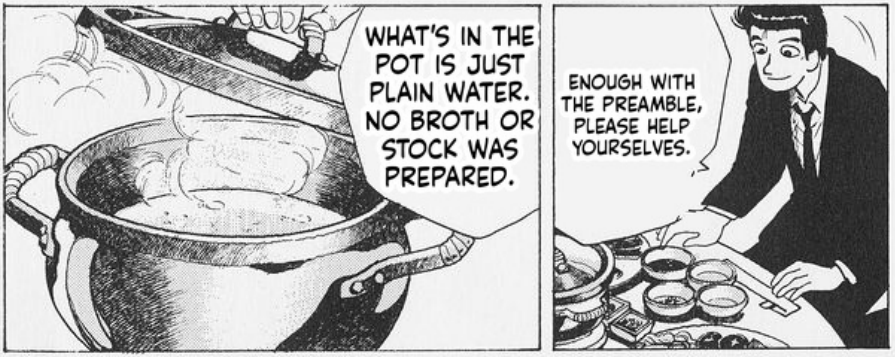
BUT HOW ON EARTH ARE YOU GOING TO TURN ALL THIS INTO A HOT POT?
HAVING SUCH A MASSIVE VARIETY OF INGREDIENTS IS CERTAINLY EXTRAVAGANT, BUT...
THE ULTIMATE HOT POT, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ANYTHING GOES POT?

2

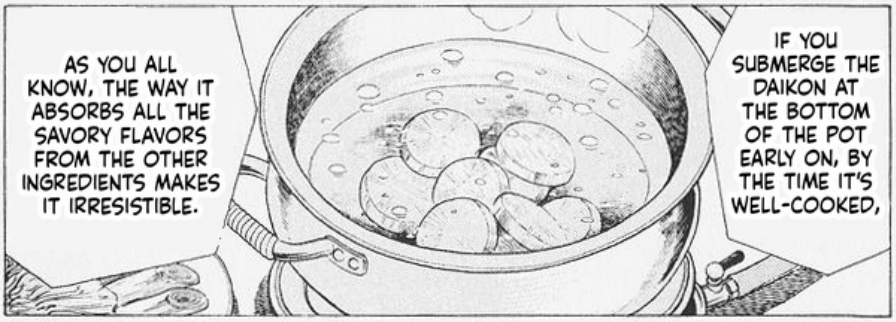

THE BEST THING ABOUT HOT POT IS THAT YOU CAN MAKE IT WITH ANY INGREDIENTS, IT HELPS STRANGERS BOND INSTANTLY...
AS I MENTIONED WHEN LISTING THE BENEFITS OF HOT POT,
AND IT ALLOWS EVERYONE TO RELAX FROM THE BOTTOM OF THEIR HEARTS.
WON'T IT JUST END UP BEING A DISORGANIZED JUMBLE?

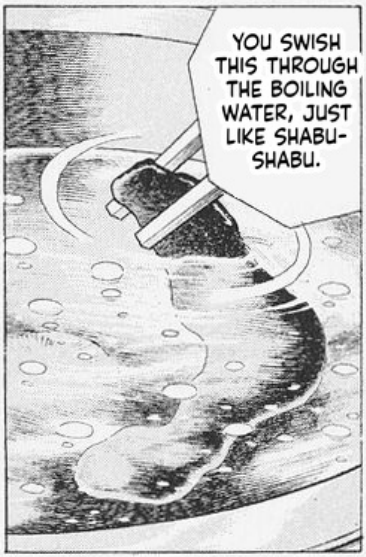
SO THIS IS WHAT HE MEANT...
HE SAID HE GRASPED SOMETHING FROM HECHIKAN'S TEA CEREMONY HOSPITALITY,
I HOPE HE HASN'T MISUNDER-STOOD HECHIKAN'S PHILOSOPHY.
WHEN INVITING A GUEST, HOW SHOULD ONE TREAT THEM?
TO PUSH THAT SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY TO ITS LIMIT THROUGH A HOT POT—THAT IS THE ULTIMATE HOT POT.

IN THAT REGARD, THE 'YAMINABE' IS SUPERIOR. SINCE THE DINERS BRING THEIR OWN INGREDIENTS...
TO PLEASE A GUEST, THE BEST WAY IS TO USE THE INGREDIENTS THAT THE GUEST LIKES MOST.
THE HOST SIMPLY GATHERS VARIOUS INGREDIENTS ON THE GUESTS' BEHALF... THAT IS WHAT THIS 'OMNI-POT' IS.


WHAT'S IN THE POT IS JUST PLAIN WATER. NO BROTH OR STOCK WAS PREPARED.
ENOUGH WITH THE PREAMBLE, PLEASE HELP YOURSELVES.

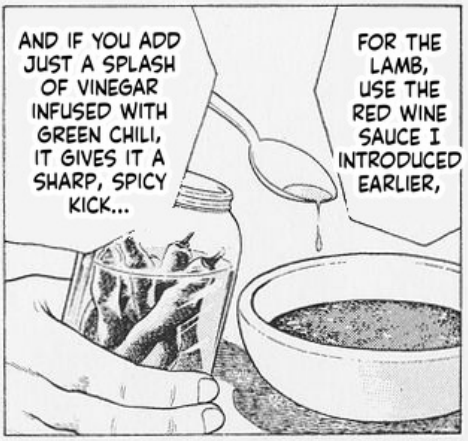
FIRST, THE PONZU.
ANOTHER JOY OF HOT POT IS THE SAUCES AND CONDIMENTS.
PART OF THE JOY OF YOROZU-NABE IS TASTING HOW THE PLAIN WATER GRADUALLY TRANSFORMS INTO A DELICIOUS SOUP.
AS YOU ADD VARIOUS INGREDIENTS, THEY RELEASE THEIR FLAVORS.
AND THIS IS PICKLED PLUM FLESH, STRAINED AND THINNED WITH DASHI.
BUT RATHER THAN EXPLAINING THEM ALL, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO INTRODUCE THEM AS YOU EAT.
MINCED SCALLIONS FOR AROMA, AND A GENEROUS AMOUNT OF GROUND BLACK SESAME SEEDS.
THIS ONE IS A MIXTURE OF RED WINE, SOY SAUCE, AND GINGER JUICE,
4
CHILI PEPPERS PICKLED IN VINEGAR— AN OKINAWAN SPECIALTY —GRATED SALTED KRILL, AND MINCED KIMCHI.
WE HAVE A VARIETY OF CONDIMENTS PREPARED AS WELL.
AND VARIOUS OTHER THINGS.


AS YOU ALL KNOW, THE WAY IT ABSORBS ALL THE SAVORY FLAVORS FROM THE OTHER INGREDIENTS MAKES IT IRRESISTIBLE.
IF YOU SUBMERGE THE DAIKON AT THE BOTTOM OF THE POT EARLY ON, BY THE TIME IT'S WELL-COOKED,


YOU SWISH THIS THROUGH THE BOILING WATER, JUST LIKE SHABU-SHABU.

SINCE IT'S A LAMB LESS THAN SIX MONTHS OLD, BEFORE ITS MILK TEETH HAVE EVEN CHANGED, THERE'S NO GAMEY SMELL.
AS FOR THIS LAMB, THE CUT IS THE EYE OF RIB. IT'S JUST THE LEAN PART OF THE RIB, SLICED THIN.
IT'S WONDERFULLY DELICIOUS EVEN WHEN EATEN AS SASHIMI.

5


AND IF YOU ADD JUST A SPLASH OF VINEGAR INFUSED WITH GREEN CHILI, IT GIVES IT A SHARP, SPICY KICK...
FOR THE LAMB, USE THE RED WINE SAUCE I INTRODUCED EARLIER,

THIS IS EXACTLY HOW THE INGREDIENTS AND THE SAUCE SHOULD GET ALONG!
THE SESAME EXPANDS THE FLAVOR, THE CHILI PEPPER TIGHTENS IT UP, AND THE GINGER CLEARS THE PALATE!
MUHOHOHO! RED WINE IS THE PERFECT MATCH FOR LAMB!
ゴニョ
WE'LL SUBMERGE THESE IN THE POT AS WELL.
PORK AND SHRIMP DUMPLINGS, WHITEFISH CAKES, AND MEAT, CHIVE, AND SHIITAKE DUMPLINGS.
PORK ISN'T GOOD UNLESS IT'S COOKED THOROUGHLY, SO WE'LL PUT IT RIGHT INTO THE POT.
6
TAKE THE THIN SLICES OF GOLDEN EYE SNAPPER, PUT THEM IN A CHINESE SHABU-SHABU STRAINER, AND GIVE THEM A SHAKE.
THIS FISH IS SO GOOD IT COULD BE EATEN AS SASHIMI, SO PLEASE ENJOY IT MEDIUM-RARE...
WE'LL EAT THE WHITEFISH WHILE WAITING FOR THE DUMPLINGS AND FISH CAKES TO COOK.

*TL NOTE: 'ALFONSINO' IS ANOTHER TERM FOR GOLDEN-EYE SNAPPER.

UGAGAGA! I CAN'T HOLD BACK ANYMORE!
D-DON'T MESS WITH ME! HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN ON MAKING ME WAIT?!
I'M EATING!
I THINK THE DUMPLINGS WE PUT IN EARLIER SHOULD BE READY BY NOW.
OR MAYBE I'LL HAVE THE DUCK RIGHT ABOUT NOW...
8
MMPH! DUCK IS BEST WITH RAW SOY SAUCE, GRATED RADISH, AND CHILI PEPPER!
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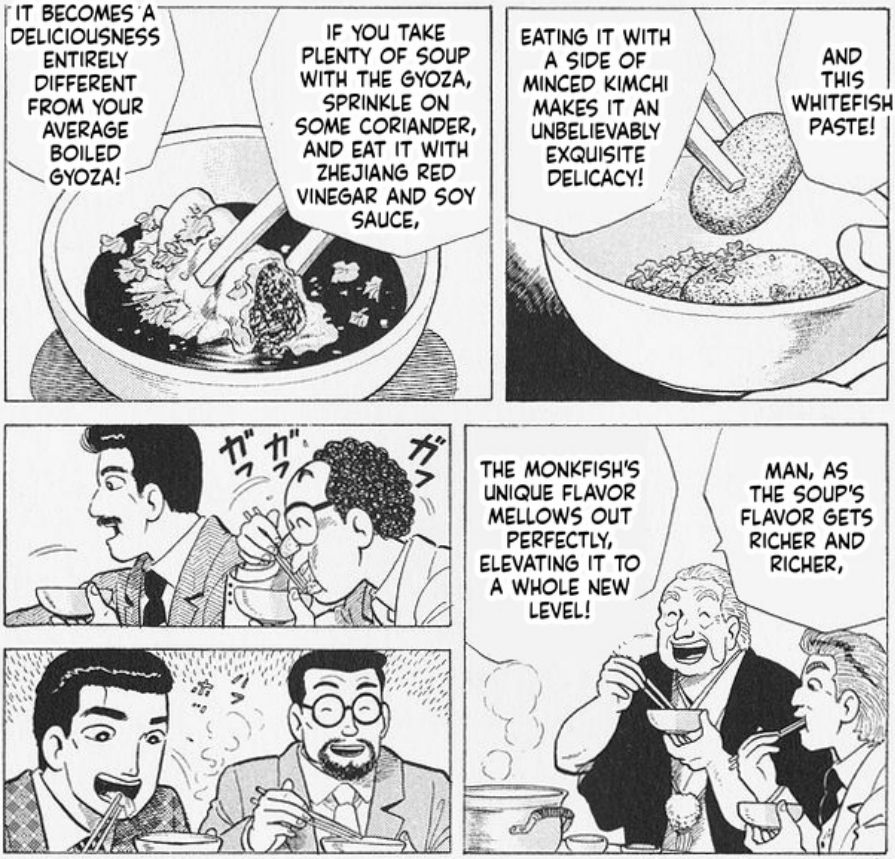
IT BECOMES A DELICIOUSNESS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM YOUR AVERAGE BOILED GYOZA!
IF YOU TAKE PLENTY OF SOUP WITH THE GYOZA, SPRINKLE ON SOME CORIANDER, AND EAT IT WITH ZHEJIANG RED VINEGAR AND SOY SAUCE,
EATING IT WITH A SIDE OF MINCED KIMCHI MAKES IT AN UNBELIEVABLY EXQUISITE DELICACY!
AND THIS WHITEFISH PASTE!
ガフ ガフ ガフ
THE MONKFISH'S UNIQUE FLAVOR MELLOWS OUT PERFECTLY, ELEVATING IT TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL!
MAN, AS THE SOUP'S FLAVOR GETS RICHER AND RICHER,
RIGHT, RIGHT, THERE'S A NICE VARIETY OF SAUCES HERE TOO, HOW INTERESTING.

IT'S DILUTED WITH SAKE THAT'S HAD THE ALCOHOL BOILED OFF, SO IT HAS A NICE HINT OF SWEETNESS.
OH HO, THIS IS AKITA'S SHOTTSURU.
THIS IS SESAME PASTE DISSOLVED IN DASHI.
IF YOU ADD SHICHIMI CHILI PEPPER TO THAT SAME SHOTTSURU SAUCE, IT'S PERFECT FOR KIRITANPO!
IF YOU ADD HAWK'S CLAW CHILI AND MINCED CORIANDER TO THIS, IT TAKES ON A SOUTHEAST ASIAN FLAIR,
THIS GOES GREAT WITH THE PORK AND SHRIMP MEATBALLS!
THIS IS FUN!
EVEN WITH THE SAME SAUCE, CHANGING THE CONDIMENTS COMPLETELY TRANSFORMS ITS CHARACTER.
10
CRUSHING DAITOKUJI NATTO AND THINNING IT WITH DASHI... THIS ASTRINGENCY IS TRULY WONDERFUL.
THIS IS DAITOKUJI NATTO!
ADD PLENTY OF NEEDLE-THIN GINGER TO THIS...
NO, THIS IS TRULY TOP-NOTCH...!
OHO! I THOUGHT THINGS LIKE PORK WEREN'T SUITED FOR HOT POTS.

THESE MEATBALLS ARE INCREDIBLE WHEN YOU DIP THEM IN A MIX OF RED VINEGAR AND THE HOT POT SOUP.
BLACK VINEGAR WORKS GREAT TOO.
WELL THEN, IT'S A BATTLE OF THE SAUCES! THIS SHOULD BE FUN.
HERE, TRY A PIECE OF THAT LAMB WITH MY SPECIAL SAUCE.
MAKE SURE TO SWISH THE SHRIMP IN THE POT SO THEY DON'T OVERCOOK...
EATING WONTONS IN THIS COMPLEX, RICH BROTH MAKES THE ONES AT CHINESE RESTAURANTS SEEM DULL BY COMPARISON.
HEH! PUTTING WONTONS IN A HOT POT WAS A CLEVER IDEA.
IT'S A STRANGE YET SOMEHOW NOSTALGIC FLAVOR.
TRY THAT SHRIMP WITH THIS SAUCE MADE OF CURRY ROUX DISSOLVED IN DASHI.
IF YOU HAVE IT WITH THIS SOY SAUCE, SESAME OIL, AND GREEN ONION DIP...
THIS IS THE ABSOLUTE BEST!
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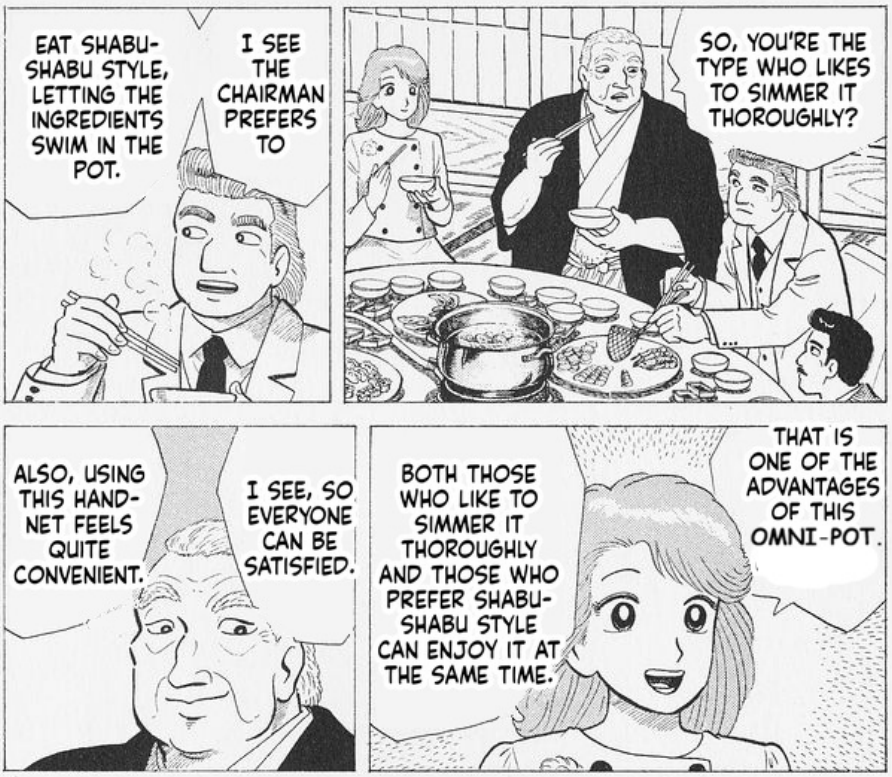
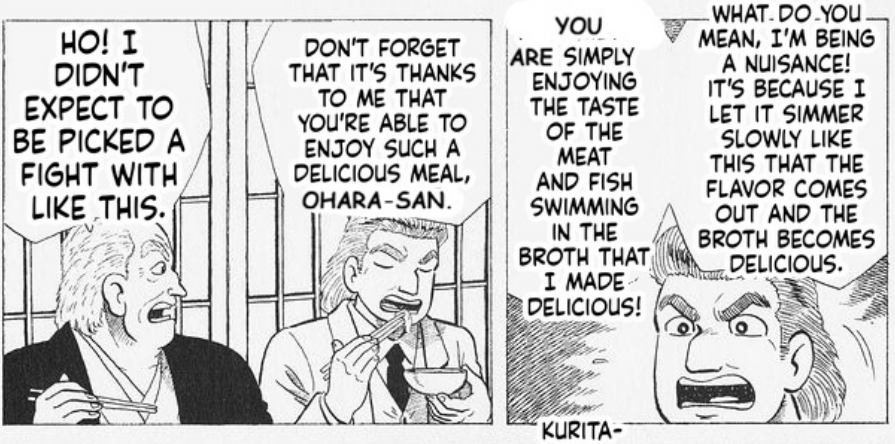
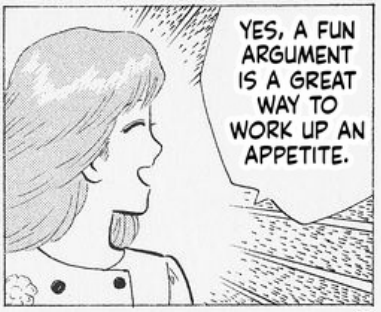

EAT SHABU-SHABU STYLE, LETTING THE INGREDIENTS SWIM IN THE POT.
I SEE THE CHAIRMAN PREFERS TO
SO, YOU'RE THE TYPE WHO LIKES TO SIMMER IT THOROUGHLY?
ALSO, USING THIS HAND-NET FEELS QUITE CONVENIENT.
I SEE, SO EVERYONE CAN BE SATISFIED.
BOTH THOSE WHO LIKE TO SIMMER IT THOROUGHLY AND THOSE WHO PREFER SHABU-SHABU STYLE CAN ENJOY IT AT THE SAME TIME.
THAT IS ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS OMNI-POT.
12
IT'S TRULY WONDERFUL NOT TO CAUSE TROUBLE FOR OTHERS.
BUT BY PUTTING IT IN THIS HAND-NET, YOU ENSURE THE BROTH IN THE POT DOESN'T GET MESSY.
WITH A PREFERENCE FOR SIMMERING IT LIKE KOIZUMI-KUN, THE MEAT WOULD COOK AND FALL APART WHILE YOU'RE MESSING WITH IT USING CHOPSTICKS.
FOR A SHABU-SHABU LOVER LIKE ME, IF YOU HOLD A THIN SLICE OF FLOUNDER WITH CHOPSTICKS AND LET IT SWIM, THE MEAT WON'T FALL APART,


HO! I DIDN'T EXPECT TO BE PICKED A FIGHT WITH LIKE THIS.
DON'T FORGET THAT IT'S THANKS TO ME THAT YOU'RE ABLE TO ENJOY SUCH A DELICIOUS MEAL, OHARA-SAN.
YOU ARE SIMPLY ENJOYING THE TASTE OF THE MEAT AND FISH SWIMMING IN THE BROTH THAT I MADE DELICIOUS!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I'M BEING A NUISANCE! IT'S BECAUSE I LET IT SIMMER SLOWLY LIKE THIS THAT THE FLAVOR COMES OUT AND THE BROTH BECOMES DELICIOUS.

ワッハッハッハッ!

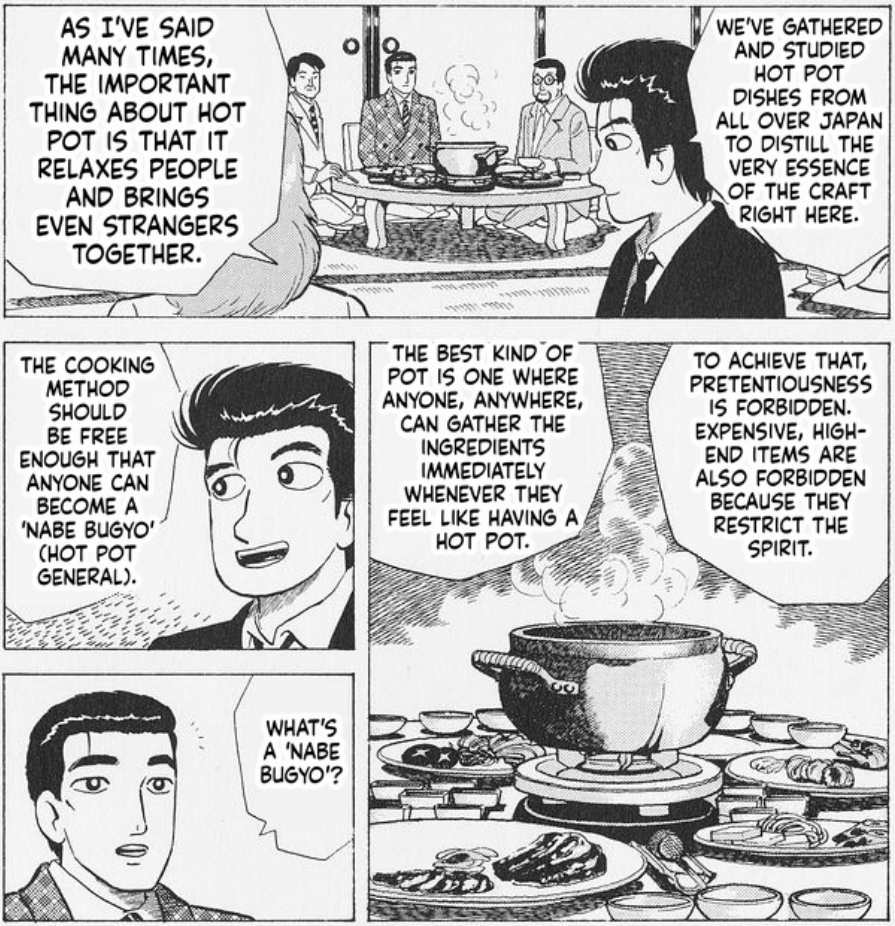
KURITA-KUN, IS THIS ANOTHER SIDE EFFECT OF THE OMNI-POT?


YES, A FUN ARGUMENT IS A GREAT WAY TO WORK UP AN APPETITE.

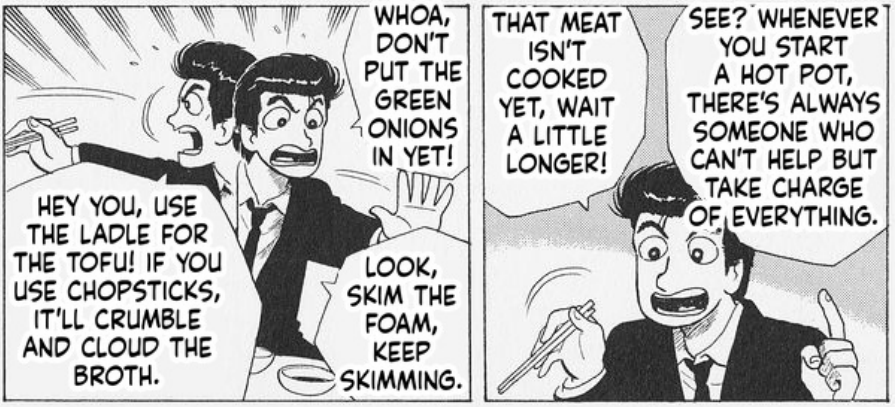
13

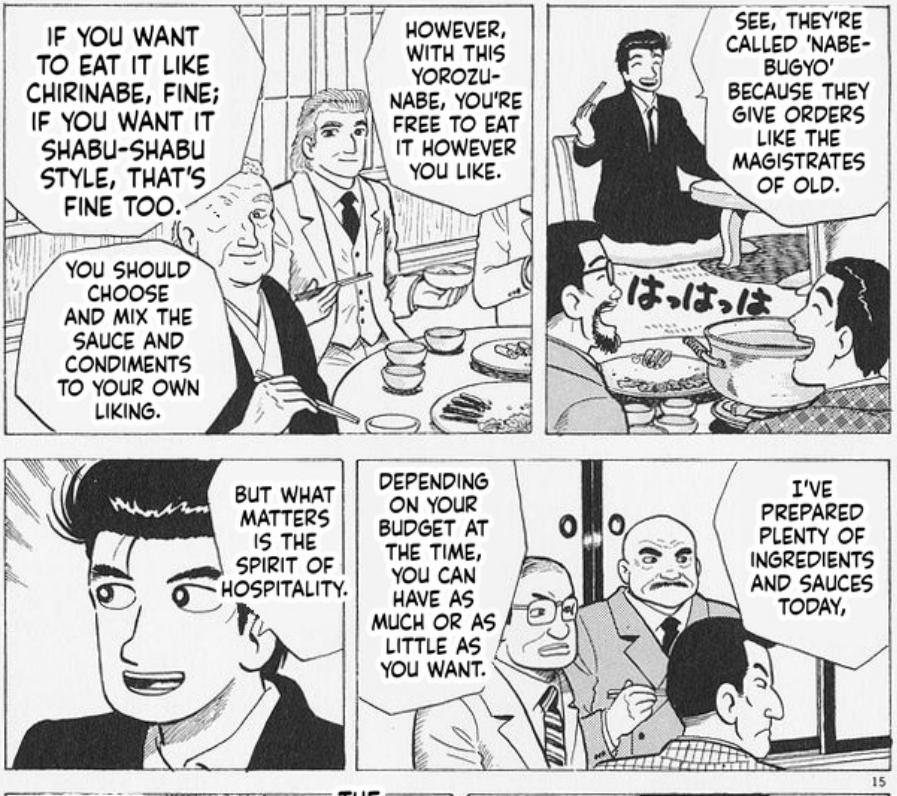
YES, SIR.

YAMAOKA-SAN, THIS OMNI-POT IS PROVING QUITE POPULAR.


AS I'VE SAID MANY TIMES, THE IMPORTANT THING ABOUT HOT POT IS THAT IT RELAXES PEOPLE AND BRINGS EVEN STRANGERS TOGETHER.
WE'VE GATHERED AND STUDIED HOT POT DISHES FROM ALL OVER JAPAN TO DISTILL THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE CRAFT RIGHT HERE.
THE COOKING METHOD SHOULD BE FREE ENOUGH THAT ANYONE CAN BECOME A 'NABE BUGYO' (HOT POT GENERAL).
WHAT'S A 'NABE BUGYO'?
THE BEST KIND OF POT IS ONE WHERE ANYONE, ANYWHERE, CAN GATHER THE INGREDIENTS IMMEDIATELY WHENEVER THEY FEEL LIKE HAVING A HOT POT.
TO ACHIEVE THAT, PRETENTIOUSNESS IS FORBIDDEN. EXPENSIVE, HIGH-END ITEMS ARE ALSO FORBIDDEN BECAUSE THEY RESTRICT THE SPIRIT.

14


WHOA, DON'T PUT THE GREEN ONIONS IN YET!
HEY YOU, USE THE LADLE FOR THE TOFU! IF YOU USE CHOPSTICKS, IT'LL CRUMBLE AND CLOUD THE BROTH.
LOOK, SKIM THE FOAM, KEEP SKIMMING.
THAT MEAT ISN'T COOKED YET, WAIT A LITTLE LONGER!
SEE? WHENEVER YOU START A HOT POT, THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO CAN'T HELP BUT TAKE CHARGE OF EVERYTHING.

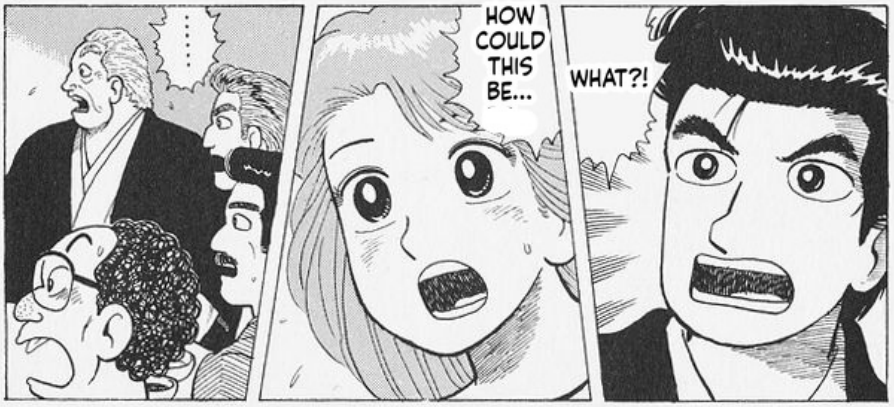

IF YOU WANT TO EAT IT LIKE CHIRINABE, FINE; IF YOU WANT IT SHABU-SHABU STYLE, THAT'S FINE TOO.
HOWEVER, WITH THIS YOROZU-NABE, YOU'RE FREE TO EAT IT HOWEVER YOU LIKE.
YOU SHOULD CHOOSE AND MIX THE SAUCE AND CONDIMENTS TO YOUR OWN LIKING.
SEE, THEY'RE CALLED 'NABE-BUGYO' BECAUSE THEY GIVE ORDERS LIKE THE MAGISTRATES OF OLD.
はっはっは
BUT WHAT MATTERS IS THE SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY.
DEPENDING ON YOUR BUDGET AT THE TIME, YOU CAN HAVE AS MUCH OR AS LITTLE AS YOU WANT.
I'VE PREPARED PLENTY OF INGREDIENTS AND SAUCES TODAY,
15
ONE MUST POUR THEIR HEART INTO SELECTING AND PREPARING THOSE INGREDIENTS.
THE INGREDIENTS ARE COMMON AND INEXPENSIVE... SO AS NOT TO BURDEN THE GUEST'S HEART,
THAT IS THE BASIS OF EVERYTHING.
IT'S JUST A HOT POT, DON'T HOLD BACK. RELAX AND EAT.
BUT THE POINT IS NOT TO PUT ANY PRESSURE ON THE GUEST.
A HOT POT SHOULD BE SOMETHING YOU CAN OFFER WITHOUT PUTTING ON AIRS.

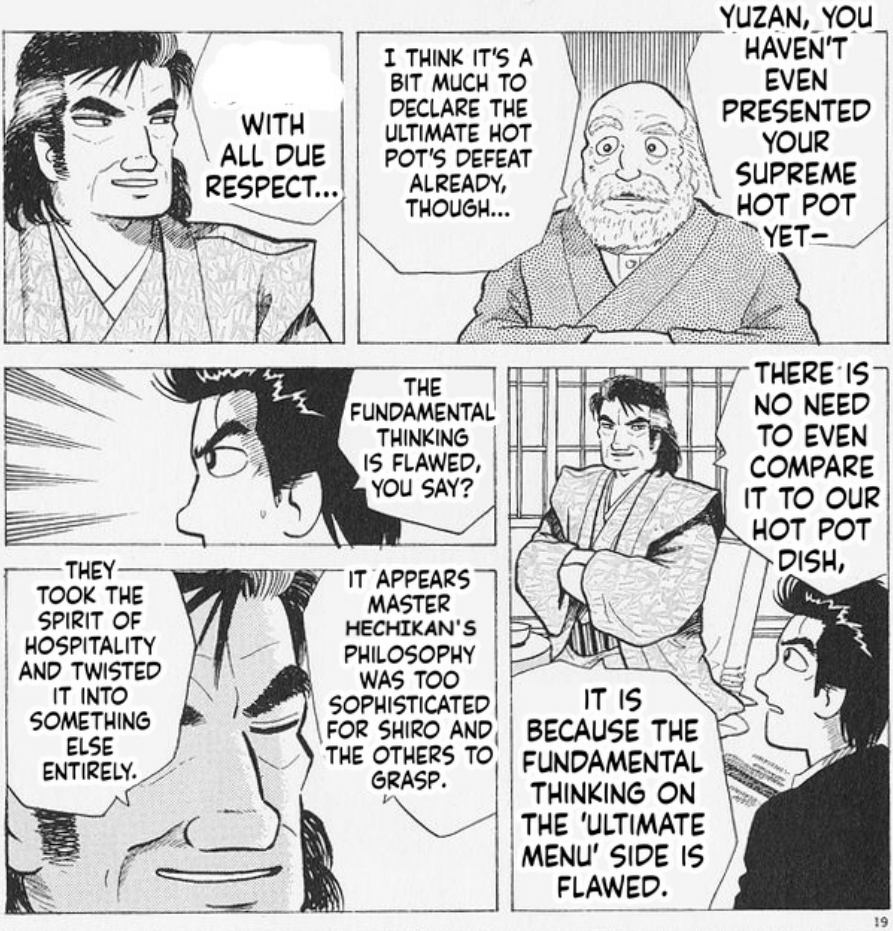
I BELIEVE THAT IS THE TRUE ESSENCE OF HOT POT.
A NATURAL STATE WHERE ONE CAN FEEL RELAXED IN EVERY CORNER OF THEIR HEART.
WE DO NOT FORCE ANY SET METHODS OR ETIQUETTE.
THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE SOPHISTICATION OF THE COOKING METHOD. IT IS POSSIBLE PRECISELY BECAUSE IT'S A HOT POT DISH THAT EVEN AN AMATEUR CAN MAKE.
YES, THE HOST, THE GUEST, AND THE GUESTS AMONG THEMSELVES ALL RELAX, THEIR HEARTS CONNECT, AND THEY BECOME CLOSE.
SO THAT IS WHAT YOU CALL HOT POT COOKING.
I SEE, YOU PLACE THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE ON MAKING PEOPLE FEEL AT EASE.
16
THAT IS WHY WE HAVE DEEMED THIS YOROZU-NABE THE ULTIMATE HOT POT DISH.
AS LONG AS YOU MAINTAIN THIS STANDARD OF HOSPITALITY, I GUARANTEE THAT NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE OR WHAT INGREDIENTS YOU USE, YOU WILL FEEL HAPPY BY THE END OF THE MEAL.
THE YOROZU-NABE DOES NOT SEEK TO MASTER THE INGREDIENTS OR THE REFINEMENT OF THE COOKING METHOD; IT SEEKS TO MASTER THE SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY.

SAYING 'DO AS YOU PLEASE' SOUNDS UNKIND, BUT IT'S ACTUALLY FILLED WITH A LOT OF HEART.
MY HEART IS JUST FLUTTERING.
THIS IS TRULY ENJOYABLE.
YES, THE INGREDIENTS ARE TRULY ORDINARY, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN ABLE TO HAVE SUCH FREE AND BOISTEROUS FUN.
WE HAVE TAKEN THIS SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY–
I LEARNED THIS FROM MASTER HECHIKAN, WHO IS HERE TODAY AS A SPECIAL JUDGE.
IT SEEMS EVERYONE RESONATED DEEPLY WITH THE IDEA THAT THIS HOT POT DISH REPRESENTS THE ULTIMATE SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY.
IT SEEMS TO BE QUITE WELL-RECEIVED.
OH NO!
I KNEW IT, YAMAOKA-SAN, YOU'VE MISUNDERSTOOD OLD MAN HECHIKAN'S SPIRIT OF TEA HOSPITALITY!
BLANK STARE...
17

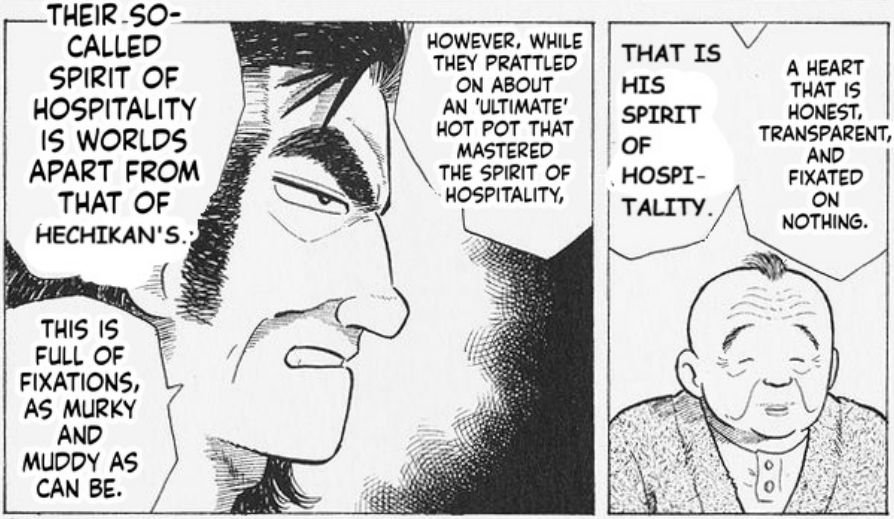
はっはっはっ
TO CALL THIS HOSPITALITY IS UTTERLY RIDICULOUS!
THE ULTIMATE HOT POT DISH HAS BEEN DEFEATED!

18


HOW COULD THIS BE...
WHAT?!

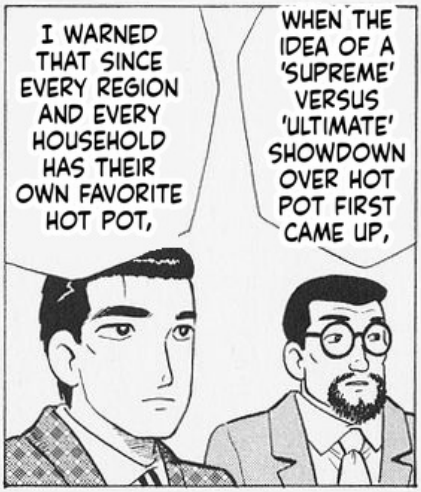

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT...
I THINK IT'S A BIT MUCH TO DECLARE THE ULTIMATE HOT POT'S DEFEAT ALREADY, THOUGH...
YUZAN, YOU HAVEN'T EVEN PRESENTED YOUR SUPREME HOT POT YET—
THE FUNDAMENTAL THINKING IS FLAWED, YOU SAY?
THEY TOOK THE SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY AND TWISTED IT INTO SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY.
IT APPEARS MASTER HECHIKAN'S PHILOSOPHY WAS TOO SOPHISTICATED FOR SHIRO AND THE OTHERS TO GRASP.
THERE IS NO NEED TO EVEN COMPARE IT TO OUR HOT POT DISH,
IT IS BECAUSE THE FUNDAMENTAL THINKING ON THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE IS FLAWED.
19
YOU'RE SAYING WE MISUNDERSTOOD MASTER HEIKAN'S INTENTIONS?
AS EXPECTED OF KAIBARA YUZAN, HE SEES THROUGH EVERYTHING...
THAT IS EXACTLY RIGHT...
WHAT EXACTLY DID WE MISUNDERSTAND...?
IT SEEMS MR. YAMAOKA MISUNDERSTOOD HECHIKAN'S HEART AFTER ALL...

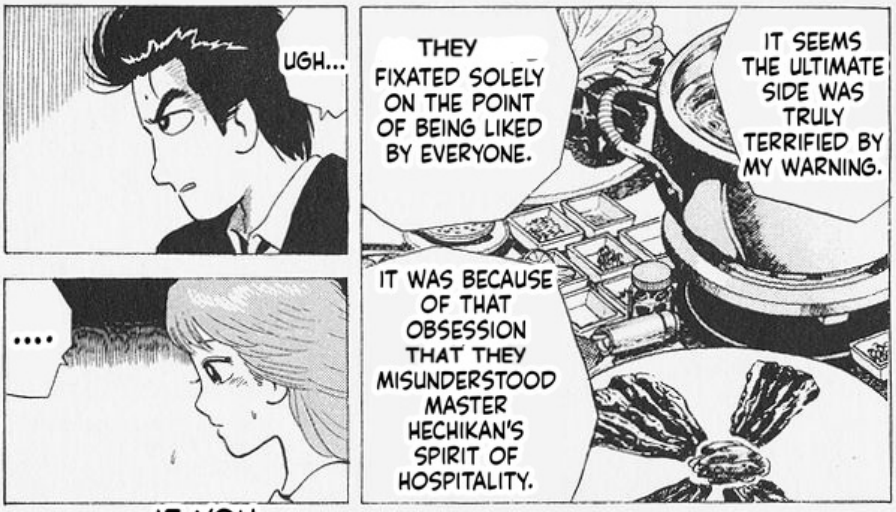
THE ESSENCE OF MASTER HECHIKAN'S HOSPITALITY WAS HIS LACK OF FIXATION.
I WAS PREVIOUSLY INVITED TO A TEA CEREMONY BY MASTER HECHIKAN AND I WAS ABLE TO TASTE THE TRUE ESSENCE OF HIS HOSPITALITY.

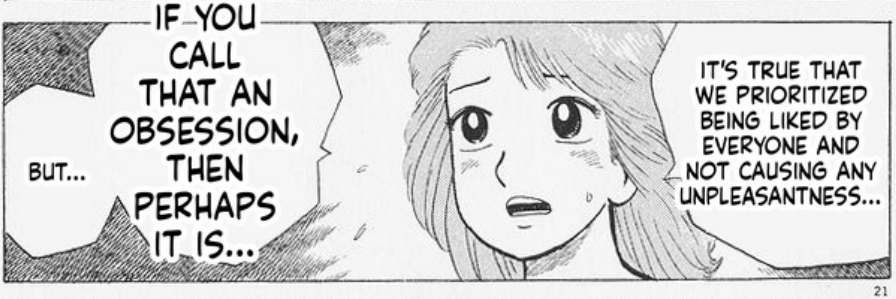

THEIR SO-CALLED SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY IS WORLDS APART FROM THAT OF HECHIKAN'S.
HOWEVER, WHILE THEY PRATTLED ON ABOUT AN 'ULTIMATE' HOT POT THAT MASTERED THE SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY,
THIS IS FULL OF FIXATIONS, AS MURKY AND MUDDY AS CAN BE.
THAT IS HIS SPIRIT OF HOSPI-TALITY.
A HEART THAT IS HONEST, TRANSPARENT, AND FIXATED ON NOTHING.

20

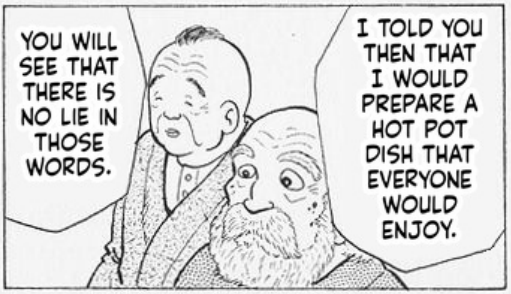
IF YOU TRY TO PRESENT A SINGLE HOT POT DISH AS THE 'SUPREME' OR 'ULTIMATE' VERSION,
I WARNED THAT IT WOULD LIKELY CAUSE OFFENSE AND INVITE BACKLASH.

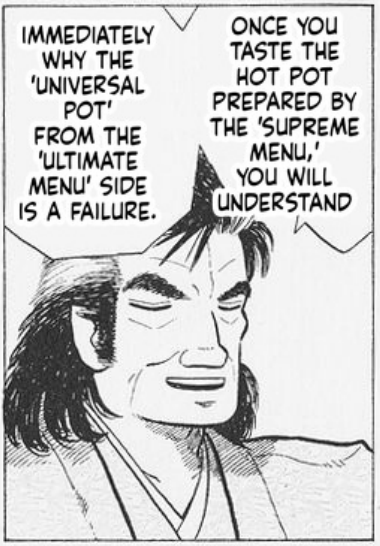

I WARNED THAT SINCE EVERY REGION AND EVERY HOUSEHOLD HAS THEIR OWN FAVORITE HOT POT,
WHEN THE IDEA OF A 'SUPREME' VERSUS 'ULTIMATE' SHOWDOWN OVER HOT POT FIRST CAME UP,


UGH...
THEY FIXATED SOLELY ON THE POINT OF BEING LIKED BY EVERYONE.
IT SEEMS THE ULTIMATE SIDE WAS TRULY TERRIFIED BY MY WARNING.
....
IT WAS BECAUSE OF THAT OBSESSION THAT THEY MISUNDERSTOOD MASTER HECHIKAN'S SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY.


BUT...
IF YOU CALL THAT AN OBSESSION, THEN PERHAPS IT IS...
IT'S TRUE THAT WE PRIORITIZED BEING LIKED BY EVERYONE AND NOT CAUSING ANY UNPLEASANTNESS...

21


YOU WILL SEE THAT THERE IS NO LIE IN THOSE WORDS.
I TOLD YOU THEN THAT I WOULD PREPARE A HOT POT DISH THAT EVERYONE WOULD ENJOY.

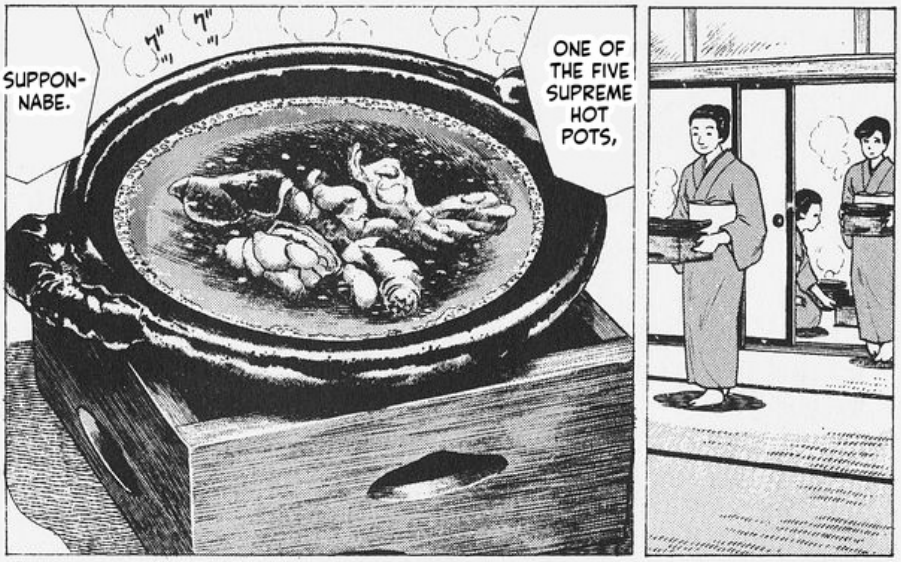

IMMEDIATELY WHY THE 'UNIVERSAL POT' FROM THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' SIDE IS A FAILURE.
ONCE YOU TASTE THE HOT POT PREPARED BY THE 'SUPREME MENU,' YOU WILL UNDERSTAND

HOWEVER, WHILE THE ULTIMATE SIDE PREPARED ONLY A SINGLE 'UNIVERSAL POT,' WE ARE DIFFERENT...

WE HAVE PREPARED FIVE ITEMS!
THE FIVE SUPREME HOT POTS.
THE FIVE GREAT HOT POTS!
WHAT?!
22
WHAT ARE THESE 'FIVE GREAT HOT POTS'?!
THIS HAS TURNED INTO SOMETHING INCREDIBLE!

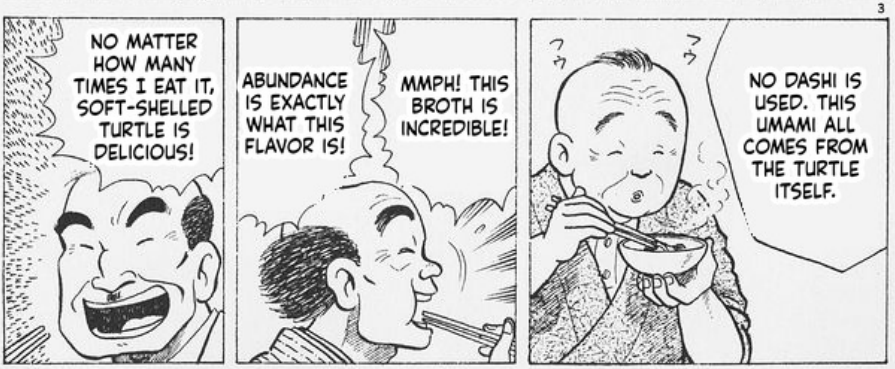
第5話
究極VS至高
鍋対決!!
〈5〉

THE FIVE GREAT HOT POTS!
THERE ARE AS MANY AS FIVE SUPREME HOT POTS?!
PROOF IS BETTER THAN THEORY; FIRST, PLEASE TRY EACH POT ONE BY ONE.
THERE CAN'T BE FIVE!
HOW CAN THERE BE FIVE OF THEM...
I SEE, SO IT'S NOT A TOP FIVE RANKING...
SO THERE ARE FIVE THAT HAVE SURPASSED EVEN THE HIGHEST LEVEL...
IT IS MERELY A MATTER OF PERSONAL PREFERENCE FOR THE PERSON EATING.
HOWEVER, THE ORDER IN WHICH I SERVE THEM HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THEIR RANKING.


SUPPON-NABE.
ONE OF THE FIVE SUPREME HOT POTS,

WITH THAT ALONE, THE TURTLE IS BOILED ALL AT ONCE OVER A HIGH COKE FIRE.
SAKE, SOY SAUCE, AND GINGER JUICE,
!

3


NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I EAT IT, SOFT-SHELLED TURTLE IS DELICIOUS!
ABUNDANCE IS EXACTLY WHAT THIS FLAVOR IS!
MMPH! THIS BROTH IS INCREDIBLE!
NO DASHI IS USED. THIS UMAMI ALL COMES FROM THE TURTLE ITSELF.

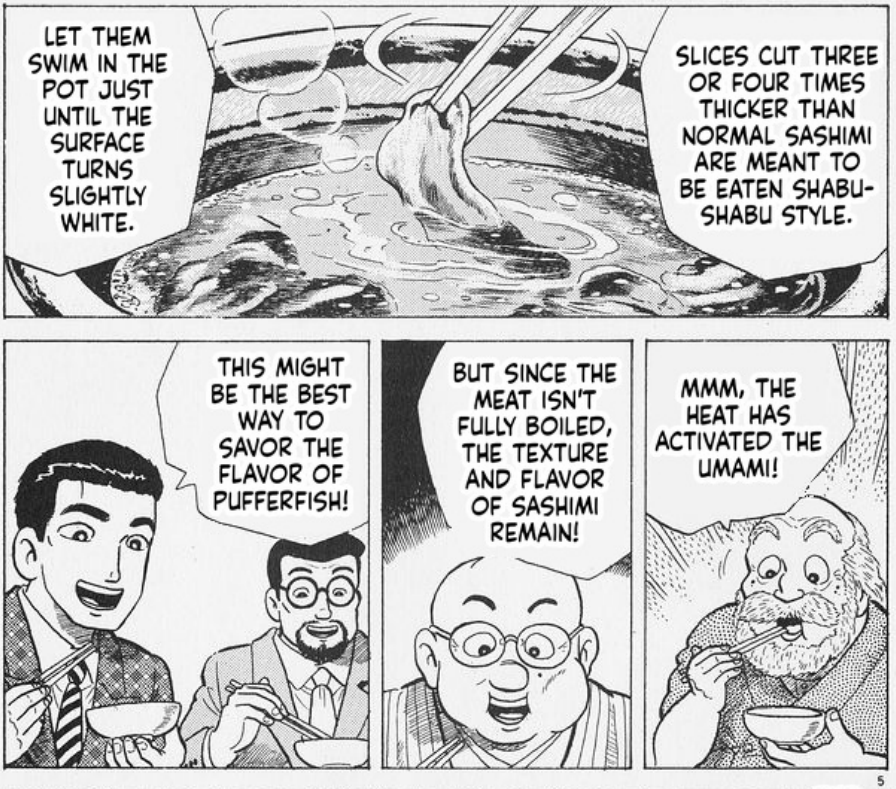
FUGU-CHIRI.
THE SECOND OF THE FIVE SUPREME HOT POTS,

FOR THE BROTH, NO DASHI IS USED; WE SIMPLY FETCH THE FINEST SPRING WATER, AND THAT IS ALL.
THE FISH IS TIGER PUFFER.

4

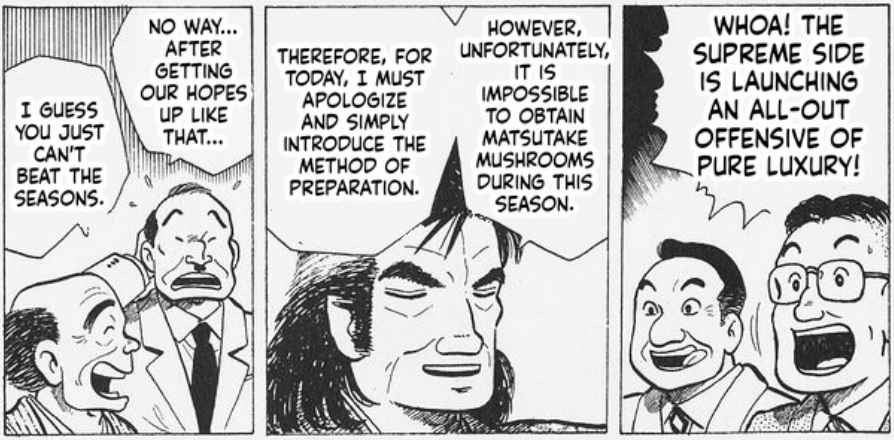
HOWEVER, I PREFER TO USE KOREAN CHILI PEPPERS, WHICH HAVE A GREAT AROMA AND MILD HEAT.
WHEN EATING IT AS SASHIMI, I DON'T USE MOMIJI-OROSHI BECAUSE IT KILLS THE DELICATE, SUBTLE FLAVOR OF THE PUFFERFISH, BUT FOR CHIRI, IT'S ACCEPTABLE.
.....

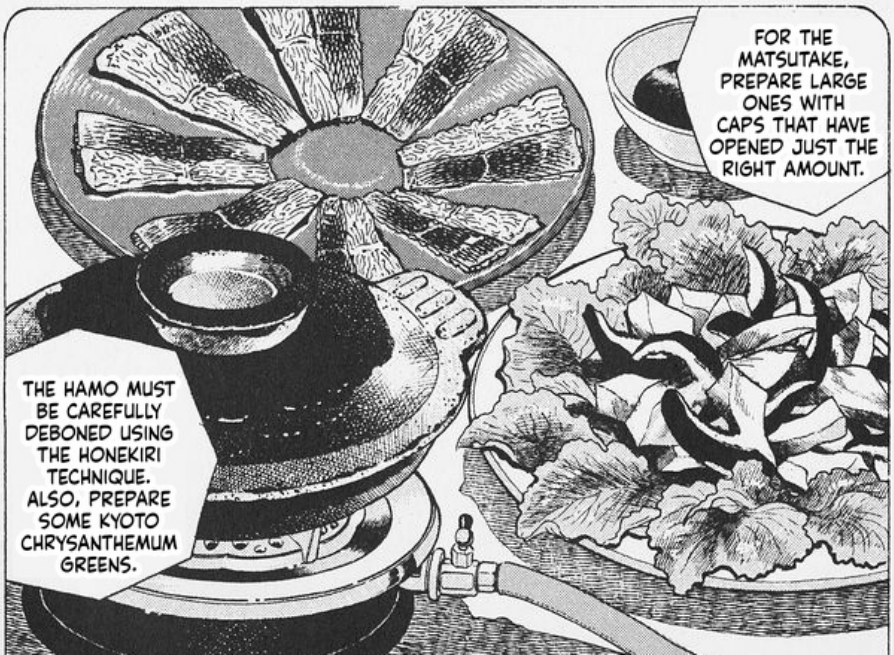
BETTER ENVELOPS THE UNIQUE AROMA OF THE PUFFERFISH.
RATHER THAN USING PRE-MADE PONZU, SQUEEZING IT FRESH AND MIXING IT WITH SOY SAUCE ON THE SPOT

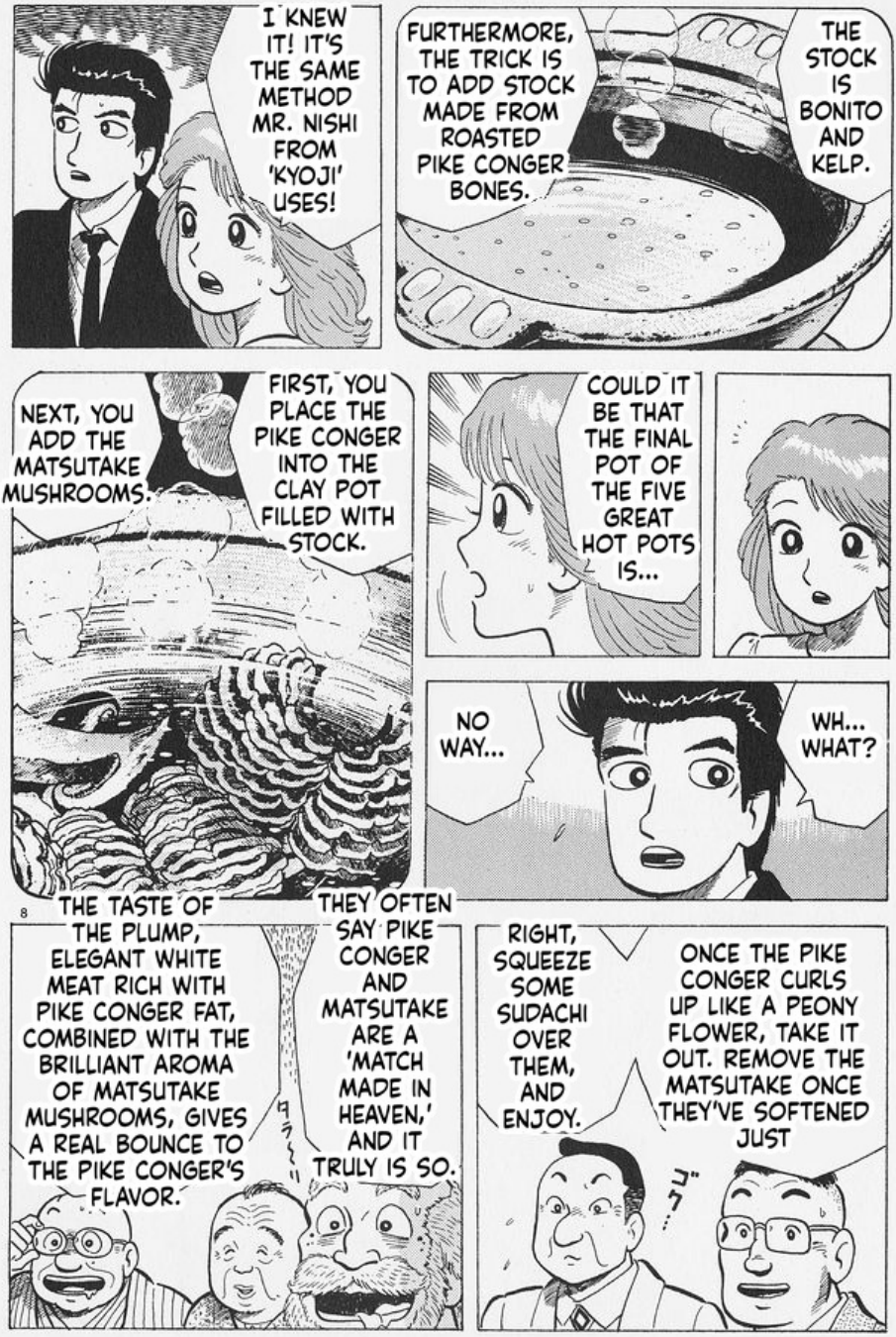

LET THEM SWIM IN THE POT JUST UNTIL THE SURFACE TURNS SLIGHTLY WHITE.
SLICES CUT THREE OR FOUR TIMES THICKER THAN NORMAL SASHIMI ARE MEANT TO BE EATEN SHABU-SHABU STYLE.
THIS MIGHT BE THE BEST WAY TO SAVOR THE FLAVOR OF PUFFERFISH!
BUT SINCE THE MEAT ISN'T FULLY BOILED, THE TEXTURE AND FLAVOR OF SASHIMI REMAIN!
MMM, THE HEAT HAS ACTIVATED THE UMAMI!
5
ABALONE SHABU-SHABU.
THE THIRD OF THE FIVE SUPREME HOT POTS,

THE BROTH IS MADE WITH CHINESE HAM AND CHICKEN STOCK.
THE DIPPING SAUCE IS SOY SAUCE WITH SESAME OIL, PLUS CHILI PEPPERS AND FINELY CHOPPED GREEN ONIONS,
AND THIS ONE HAS CILANTRO IN IT.
ABALONE SHABU-SHABU?!
YAMAOKA-SAN MADE THIS BEFORE!
===+====
YEAH.
YAMAOKA-SAN, YOU TOLD OKABOSHI-SAN ABOUT THIS ABALONE SHABU-SHABU, DIDN'T YOU.
THE HOT POT BROTH AND THE DIPPING SAUCE ARE BOTH THE SAME AS WHAT YAMAOKA-SAN MADE BEFORE!
6
JUST THINKING ABOUT HOW I MIGHT'VE DIED WITHOUT EVER KNOWING ABOUT THIS ABALONE SHABU-SHABU GIVES ME THE CHILLS...
AH, YOU LIVE A LONG LIFE AND SEE SOME THINGS.
THE TEXTURE, THE FLAVOR, AN INDESCRIBABLE DELICIOUSNESS.
THIS IS... THIS IS INCREDIBLE!

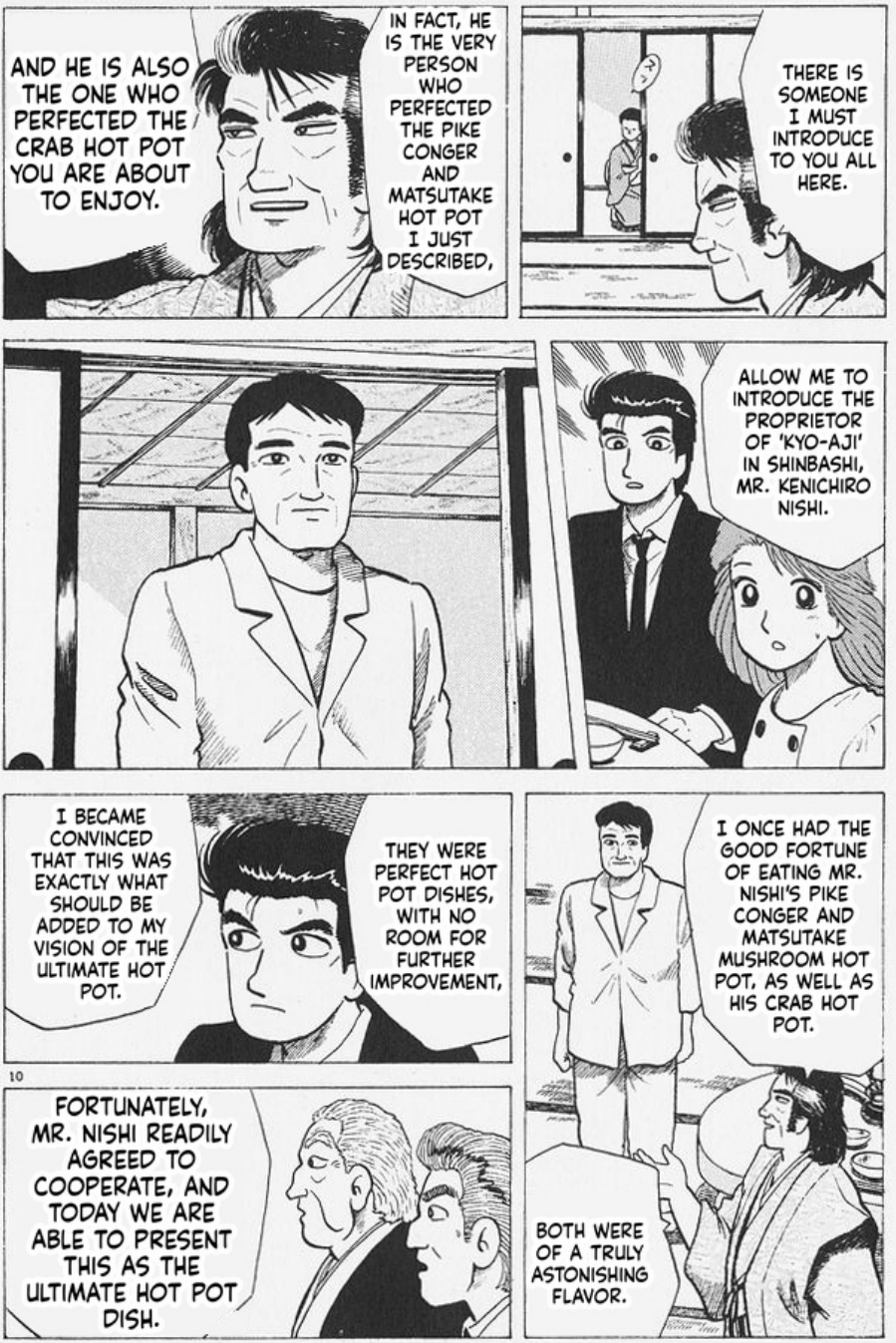
EH?!
HAMO AND MATSUTAKE HOT POT.
NEXT, THE FOURTH OF THE FIVE GREAT SUPREME HOT POTS,


NO WAY... AFTER GETTING OUR HOPES UP LIKE THAT...
I GUESS YOU JUST CAN'T BEAT THE SEASONS.
THEREFORE, FOR TODAY, I MUST APOLOGIZE AND SIMPLY INTRODUCE THE METHOD OF PREPARATION.
HOWEVER, UNFORTUNATELY, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN MATSUTAKE MUSHROOMS DURING THIS SEASON.
WHOA! THE SUPREME SIDE IS LAUNCHING AN ALL-OUT OFFENSIVE OF PURE LUXURY!


FOR THE MATSUTAKE, PREPARE LARGE ONES WITH CAPS THAT HAVE OPENED JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT.
THE HAMO MUST BE CAREFULLY DEBONED USING THE HONEKIRI TECHNIQUE. ALSO, PREPARE SOME KYOTO CHRYSANTHEMUM GREENS.

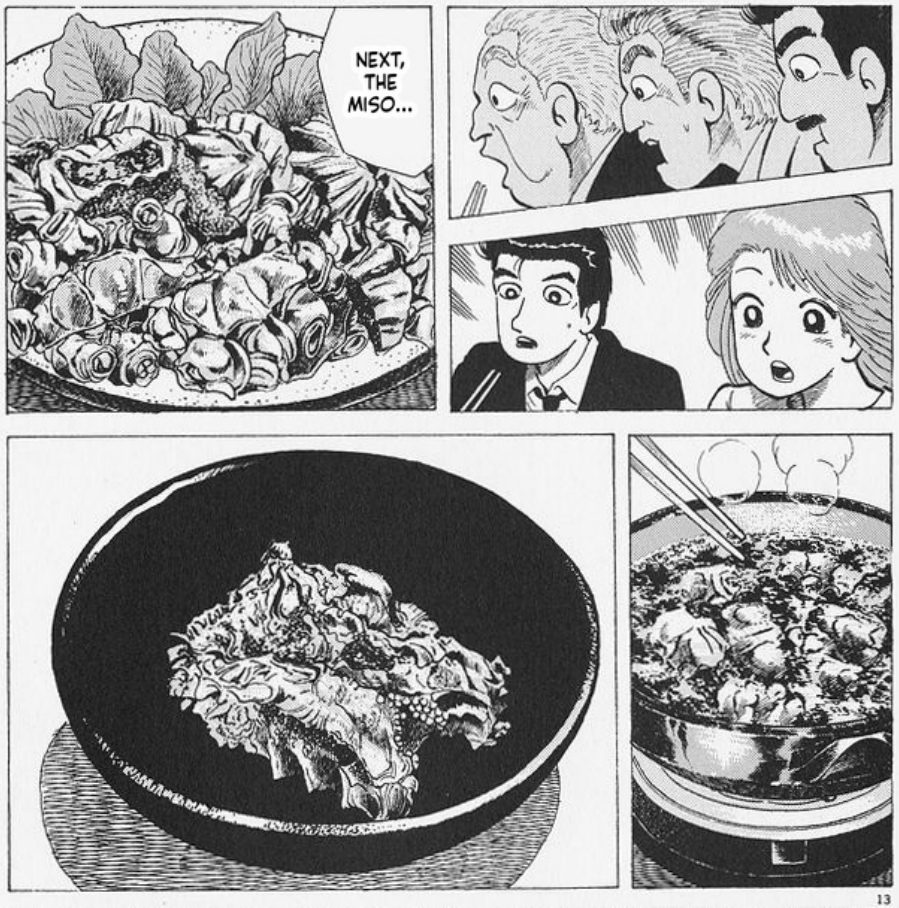

I KNEW IT! IT'S THE SAME METHOD MR. NISHI FROM 'KYOJI' USES!
FURTHERMORE, THE TRICK IS TO ADD STOCK MADE FROM ROASTED PIKE CONGER BONES.
THE STOCK IS BONITO AND KELP.
NEXT, YOU ADD THE MATSUTAKE MUSHROOMS.
FIRST, YOU PLACE THE PIKE CONGER INTO THE CLAY POT FILLED WITH STOCK.
COULD IT BE THAT THE FINAL POT OF THE FIVE GREAT HOT POTS IS...
NO WAY...
WH... WHAT?
8
THE TASTE OF THE PLUMP, ELEGANT WHITE MEAT RICH WITH PIKE CONGER FAT, COMBINED WITH THE BRILLIANT AROMA OF MATSUTAKE MUSHROOMS, GIVES A REAL BOUNCE TO THE PIKE CONGER'S FLAVOR.
THEY OFTEN SAY PIKE CONGER AND MATSUTAKE ARE A 'MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN,' AND IT TRULY IS SO.
RIGHT, SQUEEZE SOME SUDACHI OVER THEM, AND ENJOY.
ONCE THE PIKE CONGER CURLS UP LIKE A PEONY FLOWER, TAKE IT OUT. REMOVE THE MATSUTAKE ONCE THEY'VE SOFTENED JUST

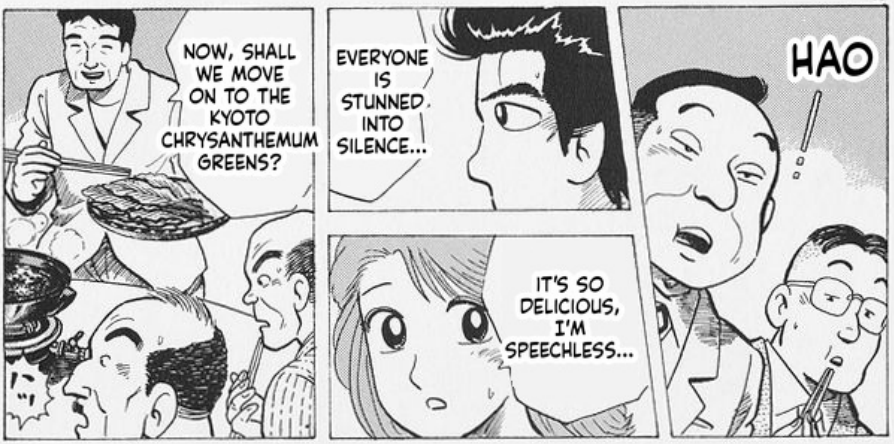
JUST DIP THE GREENS IN THE BROTH UNTIL THEY'RE SLIGHTLY WILTED.
INTO THAT BROTH, WE ADD SOFT AND SWEET KYOTO CHRYSANTHEMUM GREENS.
THE FLAVOR OF MATSUTAKE, THE FLAVOR OF PIKE CONGER—THEY MELT INTO THE DASHI, MAKING THE BROTH IN THE POT THE TRUE ESSENCE OF GOURMET FLAVOR.
GOOD GRIEF, THIS IS PRACTICALLY A CRIME.
TAHAA! I THINK I'M GONNA DREAM ABOUT MATSUTAKE AND PIKE CONGER TONIGHT!
THEY REVIVE A TONGUE GROWN WEARY FROM SUCH INTENSE FLAVOR, PREPARING IT TO FACE THE DELICIOUSNESS OF THE MATSUTAKE AND PIKE CONGER ONCE MORE.
THE KYOTO CHRYSANTHEMUM GREENS ARE REFRESHING AFTER EATING MATSUTAKE AND PIKE CONGER;
AH... K-K-K-K-KILL ME NOW...
9
CRAB HOT POT!
CRAB HOT POT.
THE FIFTH OF THE FIVE SUPREME HOT POTS,
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE, BUT STILL!


AND HE IS ALSO THE ONE WHO PERFECTED THE CRAB HOT POT YOU ARE ABOUT TO ENJOY.
IN FACT, HE IS THE VERY PERSON WHO PERFECTED THE PIKE CONGER AND MATSUTAKE HOT POT I JUST DESCRIBED,
THERE IS SOMEONE I MUST INTRODUCE TO YOU ALL HERE.
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE THE PROPRIETOR OF 'KYO-AJI' IN SHINBASHI, MR. KENICHIRO NISHI.
I BECAME CONVINCED THAT THIS WAS EXACTLY WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO MY VISION OF THE ULTIMATE HOT POT.
THEY WERE PERFECT HOT POT DISHES, WITH NO ROOM FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT,
I ONCE HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE OF EATING MR. NISHI'S PIKE CONGER AND MATSUTAKE MUSHROOM HOT POT, AS WELL AS HIS CRAB HOT POT.
BOTH WERE OF A TRULY ASTONISHING FLAVOR.
10
FORTUNATELY, MR. NISHI READILY AGREED TO COOPERATE, AND TODAY WE ARE ABLE TO PRESENT THIS AS THE ULTIMATE HOT POT DISH.

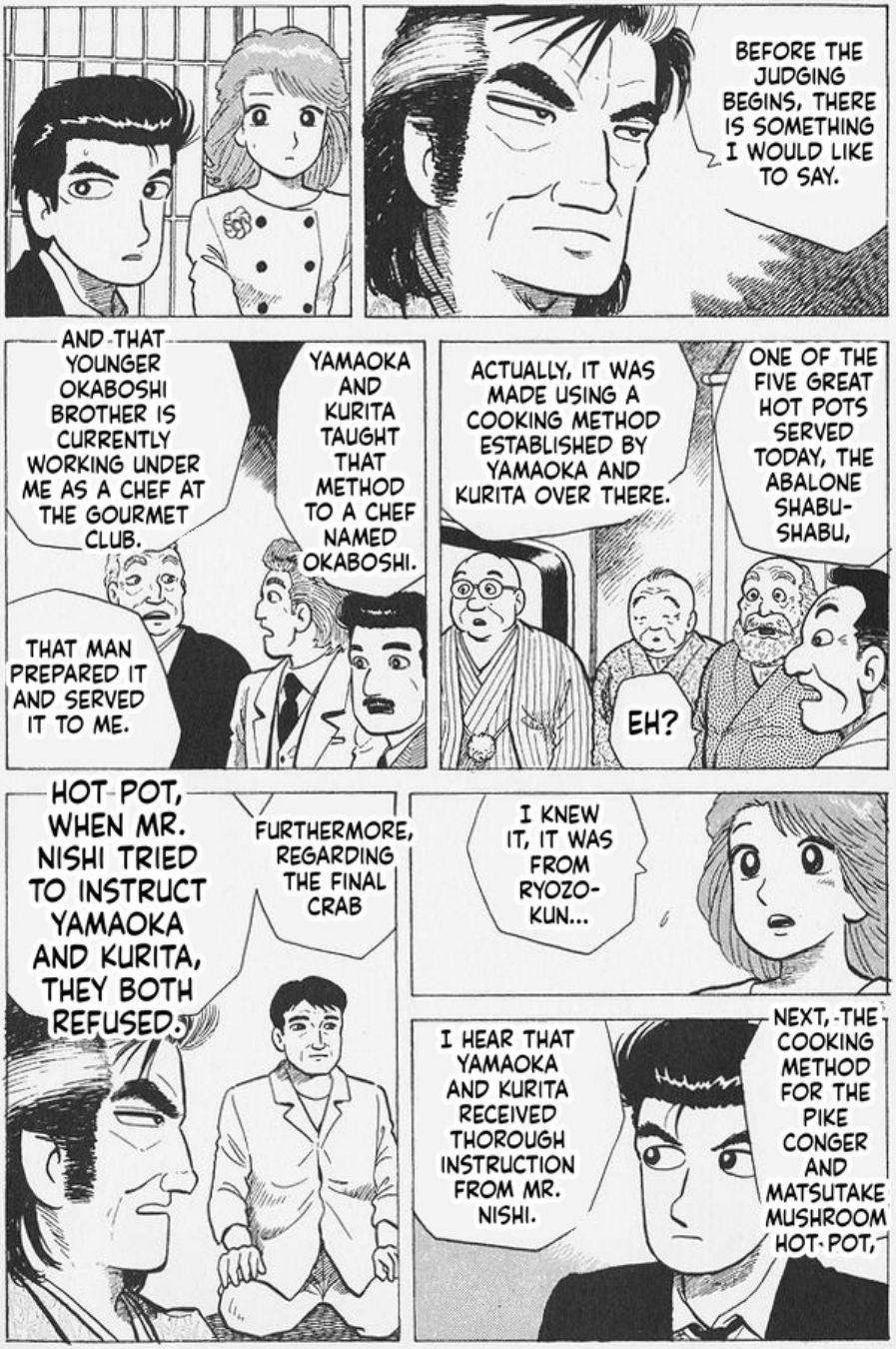
THEN, LET'S GET TO IT.
THIS IS THE HEIGHT OF LUXURY!
WHOA! WHAT A MAGNIFICENT SNOW CRAB!
11
BUT AFTER GIVING THE BISHOKU CLUB COOKS SPECIAL TRAINING, THEY'VE FINALLY BECOME ABLE TO PREPARE THEM EXACTLY AS I WISH.
NORMALLY, I WOULDN'T BE SATISFIED UNLESS I PREPARED THESE INGREDIENTS MYSELF,
I'VE DECIDED TO HAVE THEM ASSIST ME THIS TIME.

RAW IS NO GOOD, BUT OVERCOOKED IS NO GOOD EITHER.
GETTING THE TIMING OF THE HEAT JUST RIGHT IS THE DIFFICULT PART.
YOU HAVE TO JUDGE THE EXACT MOMENT IT'S READY.
I MAKE IT WITH BONITO, KELP, AND CRAB CLAWS.
THIS CRAB HOT POT BROTH IS...
THEN IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR AN AMATEUR.
12
I...
AFU.

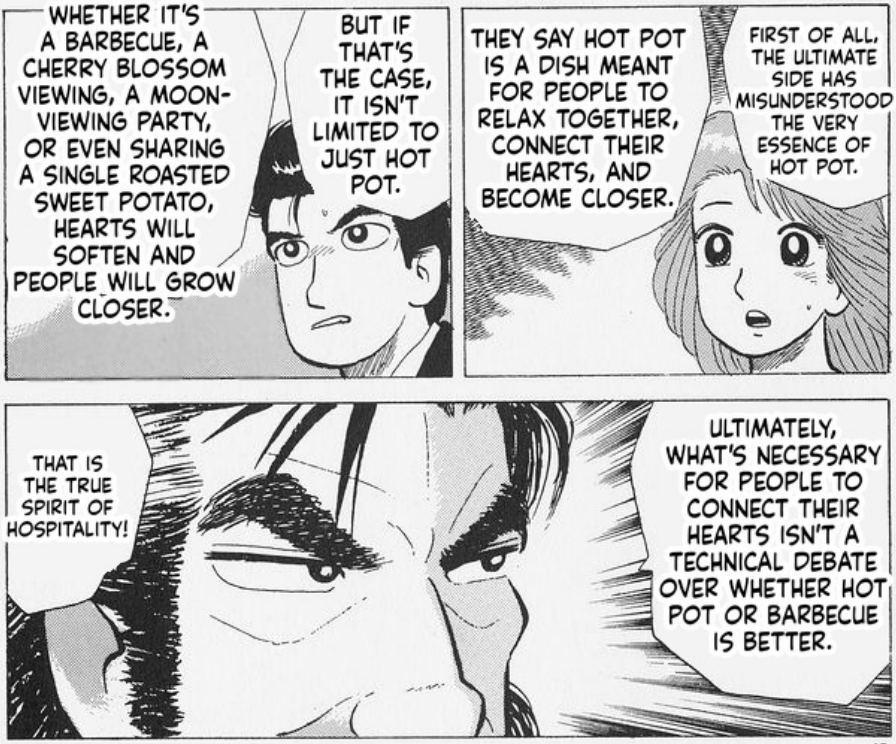

NEXT, THE MISO...
13


NOW, SHALL WE MOVE ON TO THE KYOTO CHRYSANTHEMUM GREENS?
EVERYONE IS STUNNED INTO SILENCE...
HAO
IT'S SO DELICIOUS, I'M SPEECHLESS...

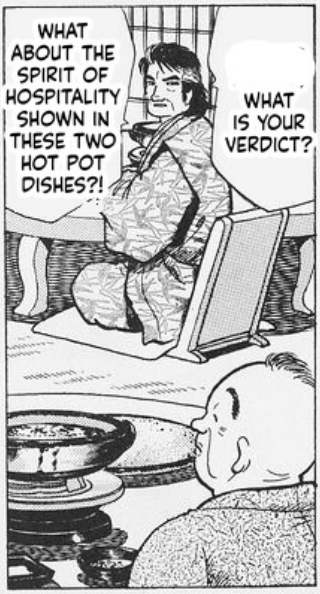
IT TRANSFORMS THE MERE PLEASURE OF EATING SOMETHING DELICIOUS INTO A DEEP, MOVING EXPERIENCE...
TONGUE TO OPEN WIDE —IT IS ABSOLUTELY FLAWLESS.
THE AROMA, THE TEXTURE, AND A TASTE THAT FORCES EVERY TASTE BUD ON THE
MY MIND HAS GONE COMPLETELY BLANK... I'M IN A TOTAL DAZE...
IT IS PURE ABUNDANCE; A DELICIOUSNESS SO PROFOUND IT MAKES POINTING OUT SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS FEEL TRIVIAL.
TO THINK A FLAVOR COULD EXIST THAT GENTLY CARESSES THE VERY DEPTHS OF ONE'S SOUL...
ALL THAT WAS USED WAS DASHI AND CRAB, YET IT HAS A TEXTURE AS SMOOTH AS HABUTAE SILK.
14
WITH THIS, YOU HAVE NOW TASTED ALL OF THE FIVE SUPREME HOT POTS.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR THIS SPECIFIC PREPARATION, THIS LEVEL OF FLAVOR COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN DRAWN OUT...
IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE MATSUBA CRAB, IT WOULDN'T POSSESS SUCH EXQUISITE FLAVOR,
*TASTE BUDS: CELLS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SENSE OF TASTE.

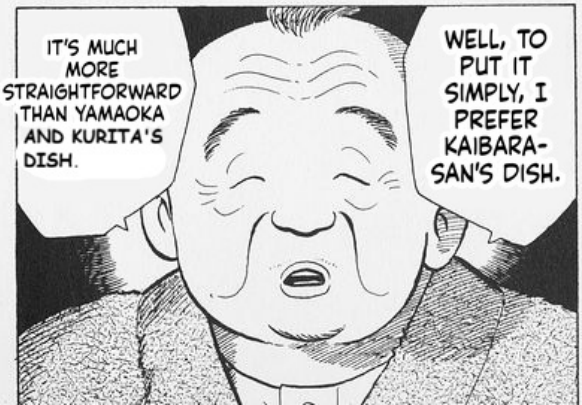

BEFORE THE JUDGING BEGINS, THERE IS SOMETHING I WOULD LIKE TO SAY.
AND THAT YOUNGER OKABOSHI BROTHER IS CURRENTLY WORKING UNDER ME AS A CHEF AT THE GOURMET CLUB.
YAMAOKA AND KURITA TAUGHT THAT METHOD TO A CHEF NAMED OKABOSHI.
THAT MAN PREPARED IT AND SERVED IT TO ME.
ACTUALLY, IT WAS MADE USING A COOKING METHOD ESTABLISHED BY YAMAOKA AND KURITA OVER THERE.
ONE OF THE FIVE GREAT HOT POTS SERVED TODAY, THE ABALONE SHABU-SHABU,
EH?
HOT-POT, WHEN MR. NISHI TRIED TO INSTRUCT YAMAOKA AND KURITA, THEY BOTH REFUSED.
FURTHERMORE, REGARDING THE FINAL CRAB
I KNEW IT, IT WAS FROM RYOZO-KUN...
I HEAR THAT YAMAOKA AND KURITA RECEIVED THOROUGH INSTRUCTION FROM MR. NISHI.
NEXT, THE COOKING METHOD FOR THE PIKE CONGER AND MATSUTAKE MUSHROOM HOT-POT,

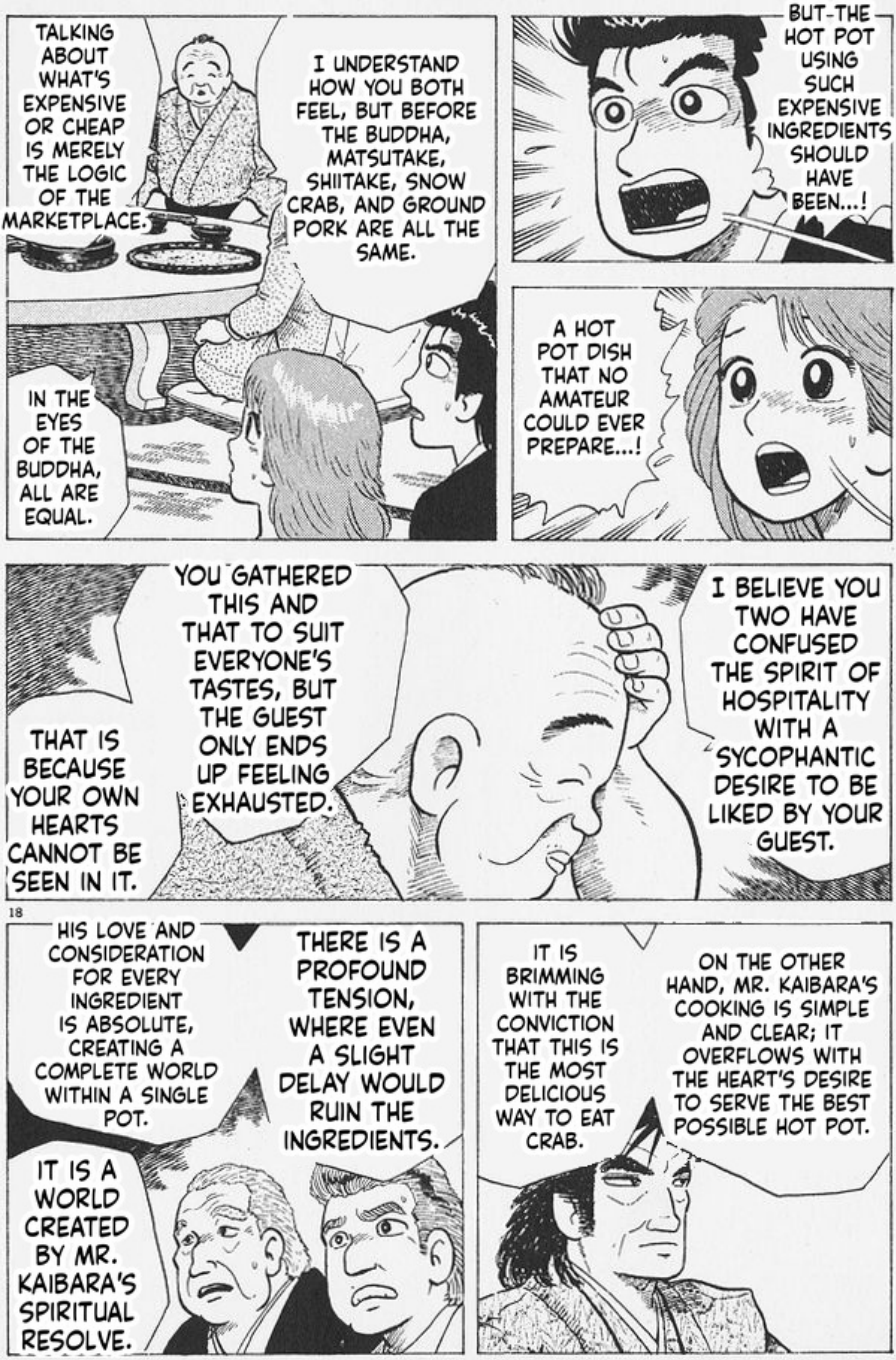
THAT IS BECAUSE THESE TWO BOUND THEMSELVES WITH TWO SPECIFIC LINES OF THINKING.
THIS IS A SURPRISE.
THEN WHY?
WHICH MEANS, IF THEY WANTED TO, THE ULTIMATE SIDE COULD HAVE SERVED THE EXACT SAME DISHES AS THE SUPREME FIVE GREAT HOT POTS.
OF HOSPITALITY; INSTEAD OF BEING FREE OF OBSESSION, THEY BECAME OBSESSED WITH BEING UNOBSESSED, HARBORING A CLOUDED SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY.
THE OTHER REASON IS THAT THEY MISUNDERSTOOD MASTER HECHIKAN'S SPIRIT
FOR THAT REASON, THEY FELT THEY HAD TO CREATE SOMETHING ADAPTABLE AND EASY FOR ANYONE TO ACCEPT.
ONE REASON IS THAT HOT POT DISHES ARE SOMETHING PEOPLE HAVE STRONG ATTACHMENTS TO, DEPENDING ON THEIR REGION OR HOUSEHOLD, SO FORCING A 'THIS IS THE ULTIMATE HOT POT' ON THEM WOULD CAUSE OFFENSE...
16
AND SO, I WAS ABLE TO CONFIDENTLY PRESENT THE FIVE GREAT HOT POTS USING A STRAIGHTFORWARD APPROACH WITHOUT WORRY.
WHEN I HEARD THAT BOTH OF THEM REFUSED THE CRAB HOT POT NISHI-SAN TRIED TO TEACH THEM, AND EVEN SAID THEY WOULDN'T USE SOFT-SHELL TURTLE, PUFFERFISH, OR MATSUTAKE MUSHROOMS, I REALIZED THEY WERE MAKING A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.

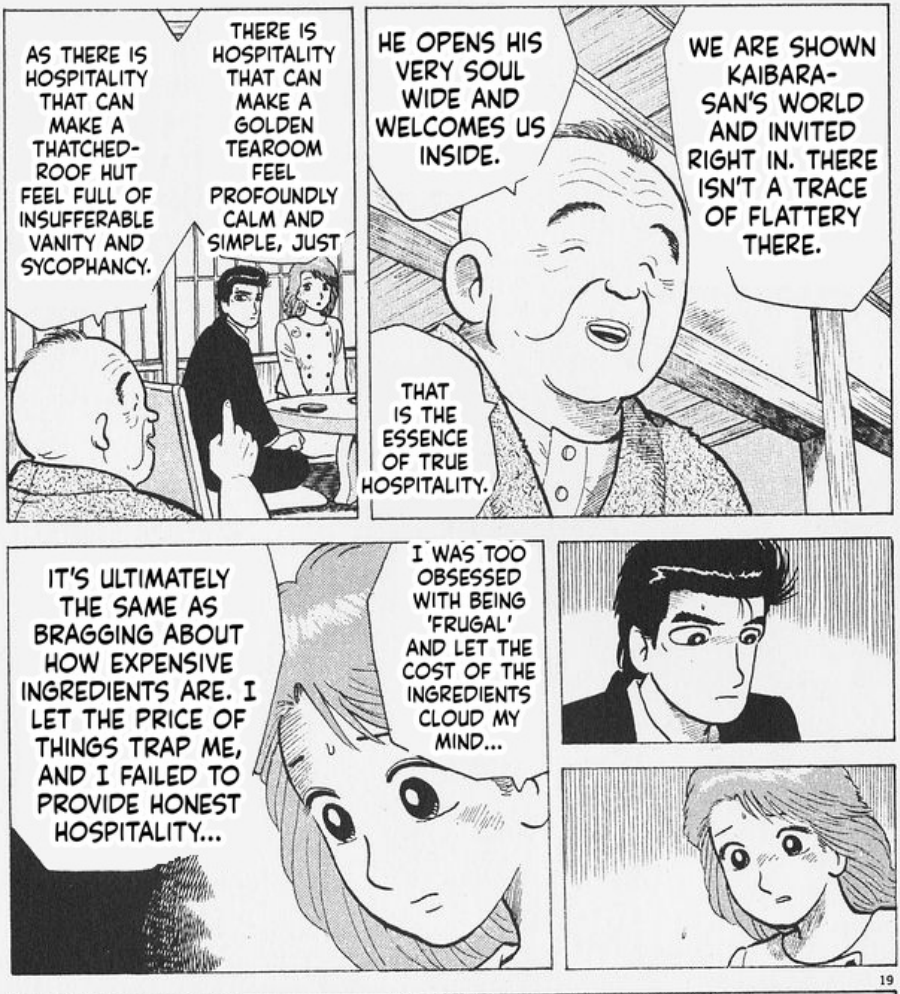

WHETHER IT'S A BARBECUE, A CHERRY BLOSSOM VIEWING, A MOON-VIEWING PARTY, OR EVEN SHARING A SINGLE ROASTED SWEET POTATO, HEARTS WILL SOFTEN AND PEOPLE WILL GROW CLOSER.
BUT IF THAT'S THE CASE, IT ISN'T LIMITED TO JUST HOT POT.
THEY SAY HOT POT IS A DISH MEANT FOR PEOPLE TO RELAX TOGETHER, CONNECT THEIR HEARTS, AND BECOME CLOSER.
FIRST OF ALL, THE ULTIMATE SIDE HAS MISUNDERSTOOD THE VERY ESSENCE OF HOT POT.
THAT IS THE TRUE SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY!
ULTIMATELY, WHAT'S NECESSARY FOR PEOPLE TO CONNECT THEIR HEARTS ISN'T A TECHNICAL DEBATE OVER WHETHER HOT POT OR BARBECUE IS BETTER.

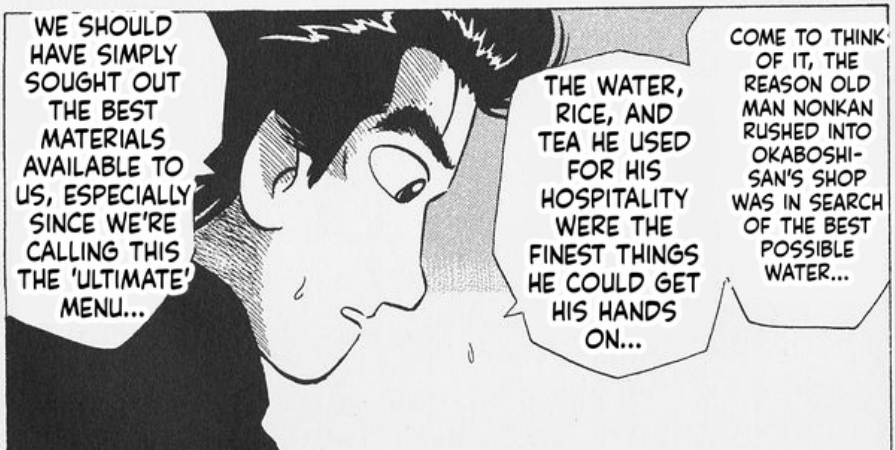
IT SEEMS THE CONVERSATION IS TURNING IN A DIRECTION WHERE I MIGHT HAVE TO FEEL SOME RESPONSIBILITY...


WHAT ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY SHOWN IN THESE TWO HOT POT DISHES?!
WHAT IS YOUR VERDICT?

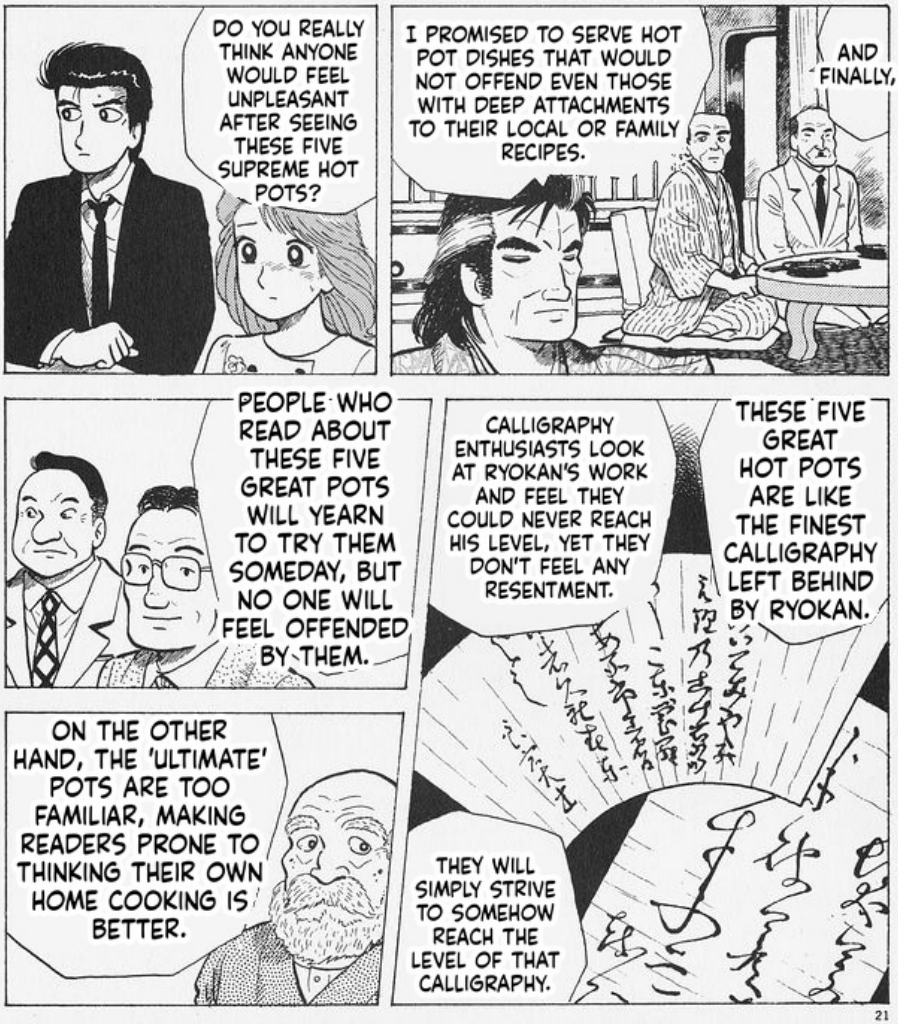

IT'S MUCH MORE STRAIGHTFORWARD THAN YAMAOKA AND KURITA'S DISH.
WELL, TO PUT IT SIMPLY, I PREFER KAIBARA-SAN'S DISH.


TALKING ABOUT WHAT'S EXPENSIVE OR CHEAP IS MERELY THE LOGIC OF THE MARKETPLACE.
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU BOTH FEEL, BUT BEFORE THE BUDDHA, MATSUTAKE, SHIITAKE, SNOW CRAB, AND GROUND PORK ARE ALL THE SAME.
IN THE EYES OF THE BUDDHA, ALL ARE EQUAL.
BUT-THE HOT POT USING SUCH EXPENSIVE INGREDIENTS SHOULD HAVE BEEN...!
A HOT POT DISH THAT NO AMATEUR COULD EVER PREPARE...!
THAT IS BECAUSE YOUR OWN HEARTS CANNOT BE SEEN IN IT.
YOU GATHERED THIS AND THAT TO SUIT EVERYONE'S TASTES, BUT THE GUEST ONLY ENDS UP FEELING EXHAUSTED.
I BELIEVE YOU TWO HAVE CONFUSED THE SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY WITH A SYCOPHANTIC DESIRE TO BE LIKED BY YOUR GUEST.
18
IT IS A WORLD CREATED BY MR. KAIBARA'S SPIRITUAL RESOLVE.
HIS LOVE AND CONSIDERATION FOR EVERY INGREDIENT IS ABSOLUTE, CREATING A COMPLETE WORLD WITHIN A SINGLE POT.
THERE IS A PROFOUND TENSION, WHERE EVEN A SLIGHT DELAY WOULD RUIN THE INGREDIENTS.
IT IS BRIMMING WITH THE CONVICTION THAT THIS IS THE MOST DELICIOUS WAY TO EAT CRAB.
ON THE OTHER HAND, MR. KAIBARA'S COOKING IS SIMPLE AND CLEAR; IT OVERFLOWS WITH THE HEART'S DESIRE TO SERVE THE BEST POSSIBLE HOT POT.


THERE IS HOSPITALITY THAT CAN MAKE A GOLDEN TEAROOM FEEL PROFOUNDLY CALM AND SIMPLE, JUST
AS THERE IS HOSPITALITY THAT CAN MAKE A THATCHED-ROOF HUT FEEL FULL OF INSUFFERABLE VANITY AND SYCOPHANCY.
WE ARE SHOWN KAIBARA-SAN'S WORLD AND INVITED RIGHT IN. THERE ISN'T A TRACE OF FLATTERY THERE.
HE OPENS HIS VERY SOUL WIDE AND WELCOMES US INSIDE.
THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF TRUE HOSPITALITY.
I WAS TOO OBSESSED WITH BEING 'FRUGAL' AND LET THE COST OF THE INGREDIENTS CLOUD MY MIND...
IT'S ULTIMATELY THE SAME AS BRAGGING ABOUT HOW EXPENSIVE INGREDIENTS ARE. I LET THE PRICE OF THINGS TRAP ME, AND I FAILED TO PROVIDE HONEST HOSPITALITY...


COME TO THINK OF IT, THE REASON OLD MAN NONKAN RUSHED INTO OKABOSHI-SAN'S SHOP WAS IN SEARCH OF THE BEST POSSIBLE WATER...
THE WATER, RICE, AND TEA HE USED FOR HIS HOSPITALITY WERE THE FINEST THINGS HE COULD GET HIS HANDS ON...
WE SHOULD HAVE SIMPLY SOUGHT OUT THE BEST MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO US, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE'RE CALLING THIS THE 'ULTIMATE' MENU...

SOFT-SHELL TURTLE, ABALONE, CRAB, PIKE CONGER AND MATSUTAKE—THEY ARE ALL MADE INTO HOT POTS BECAUSE THERE IS AN INEVITABILITY THAT THEY TASTE BEST THAT WAY.
ESSENCE NUMBER ONE: BLOWFISH IS TASTIEST WHEN MADE INTO CHIRI, SO WE MAKE IT INTO CHIRI.
FURTHERMORE, THINK ABOUT WHAT THE TRUE ESSENCE OF HOT POT COOKING IS.
HOT POT IS ONLY UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE WHO APPRECIATE THE DELICIOUSNESS OF EATING FOOD WHILE IT'S STILL HOT.
IT'S HEAT. YOU CAN EAT THE FOOD WHILE IT'S PIPING HOT.
AND WHAT DOES THAT SIGNIFY?
ESSENCE NUMBER TWO: THE GREATEST MEANING OF A HOT POT IS THAT IT'S COOKED RIGHT AT THE TABLE. THERE IS NO DISTANCE BETWEEN WHERE IT'S COOKED AND WHERE IT'S EATEN.
20
YOU'RE RIGHT, THE INEVITABILITY OF THE COOKING METHOD... IF YOU LOSE SIGHT OF THAT, IT'S MEANINGLESS...
ONLY BY PURSUING THESE TWO ESSENCES CAN YOU CALL IT THE ULTIMATE OR SUPREME HOT POT DISH.

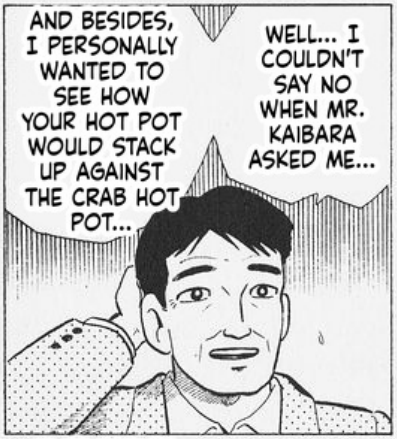

DO YOU REALLY THINK ANYONE WOULD FEEL UNPLEASANT AFTER SEEING THESE FIVE SUPREME HOT POTS?
I PROMISED TO SERVE HOT POT DISHES THAT WOULD NOT OFFEND EVEN THOSE WITH DEEP ATTACHMENTS TO THEIR LOCAL OR FAMILY RECIPES.
AND FINALLY,
PEOPLE WHO READ ABOUT THESE FIVE GREAT POTS WILL YEARN TO TRY THEM SOMEDAY, BUT NO ONE WILL FEEL OFFENDED BY THEM.
CALLIGRAPHY ENTHUSIASTS LOOK AT RYOKAN'S WORK AND FEEL THEY COULD NEVER REACH HIS LEVEL, YET THEY DON'T FEEL ANY RESENTMENT.
THESE FIVE GREAT HOT POTS ARE LIKE THE FINEST CALLIGRAPHY LEFT BEHIND BY RYOKAN.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE 'ULTIMATE' POTS ARE TOO FAMILIAR, MAKING READERS PRONE TO THINKING THEIR OWN HOME COOKING IS BETTER.
THEY WILL SIMPLY STRIVE TO SOMEHOW REACH THE LEVEL OF THAT CALLIGRAPHY.
21
YOUR STRATEGY HAS BACKFIRED.

THE ULTIMATE SIDE'S OMNI-POT WAS AN INTERESTING CONCEPT, BUT BEFORE THE TOWERING MAJESTY OF THE SUPREME SIDE'S 'FIVE GREAT POTS,' IT LOOKS LIKE A CHILD'S SANDCASTLE IN A SANDBOX.
I SHALL NOW ANNOUNCE THE RESULTS OF THE JUDGING.

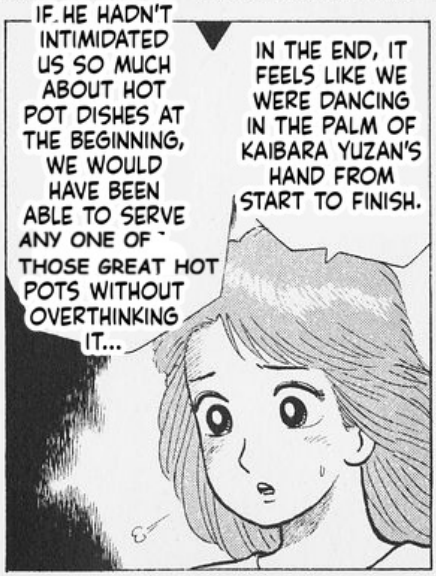
AH... IT'S BECAUSE I DID SOMETHING UNNECESSARY...
.....
THIS TIME, WITHOUT QUESTION, THE VICTORY GOES TO THE SUPREME SIDE.
BOTH IN TERMS OF IDEOLOGY AND IN CAPTURING THE TRUE ESSENCE OF HOT POT,

22

MR. YAMAOKA, I'M AFRAID I'VE DONE A TERRIBLE THING TO YOU...

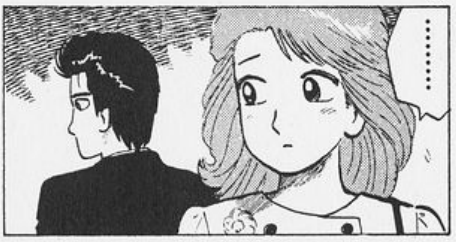

WELL... I COULDN'T SAY NO WHEN MR. KAIBARA ASKED ME...
AND BESIDES, I PERSONALLY WANTED TO SEE HOW YOUR HOT POT WOULD STACK UP AGAINST THE CRAB HOT POT...

NOT AT ALL, IT'S MY FAULT FOR NOT BEING HUMBLE ENOUGH TO ASK FOR ...YOUR GUIDANCE.


IN THE END, IT FEELS LIKE WE WERE DANCING IN THE PALM OF KAIBARA YUZAN'S HAND FROM START TO FINISH.
IF HE HADN'T INTIMIDATED US SO MUCH ABOUT HOT POT DISHES AT THE BEGINNING, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SERVE ANY ONE OF THOSE GREAT HOT POTS WITHOUT OVERTHINKING IT...

THANK YOU. I'LL SEE YOU THERE SOON, THEN...
LET ME TREAT YOU TO SOMETHING TO HELP YOU RELAX. PLEASE, COME BY THE SHOP.

23


.....

WE LOST.
IT'S A TOTAL DEFEAT.
BUT A LOSS IS A LOSS.
IF YOU LOSE THE NEXT MATCH, YOU'LL GO TO YAMAGUCHI WITH ME, RIGHT...?
NOW, CHEER UP AND LET'S GO GET SOMETHING TO EAT...
IT'S NOTHING...
OH...
WHAT'S WRONG?

美味(おい)しんぼ31 —鍋対決!!—

ビッグ コミックス

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